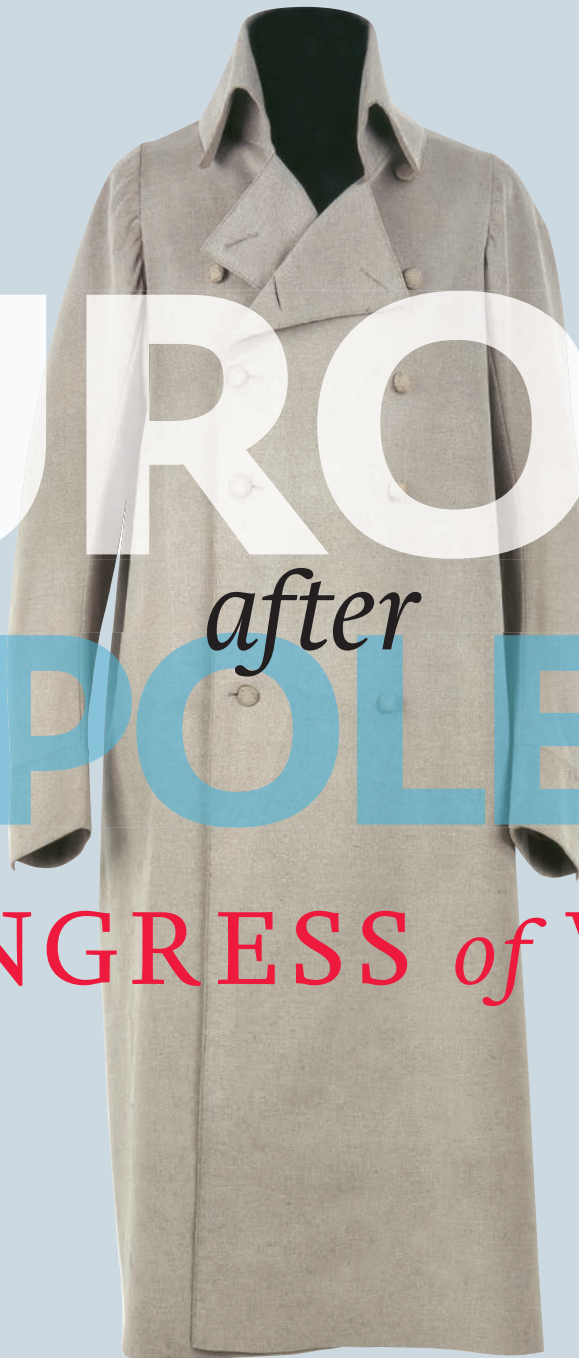


History *Today*

September 2014
Vol 64 Issue 9



EUROPE *after* NAPOLEON

The CONGRESS *of* VIENNA

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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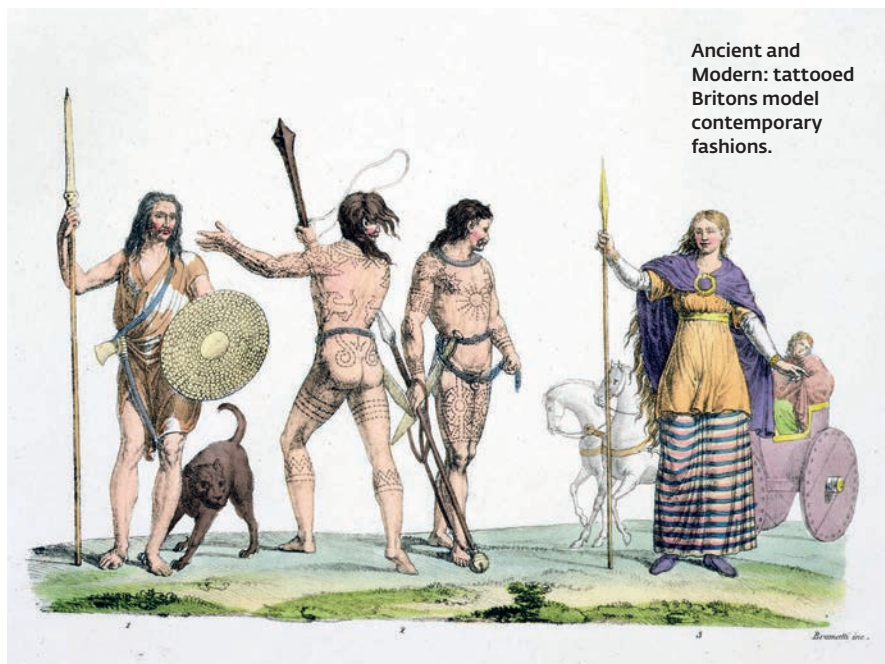
Print managed by Webmart Ltd. 01869 321321.
Printed at W. Gibbons & Sons Ltd, Willenhall, UK.
Distributed by MarketForce 020 3148 3539 (UK & RoW) and Disticor 905 619 6565 (North America).
History Today (ISSN No: 0018-2753, USPS No: 246-580) is published monthly by History Today Ltd, GBR and distributed in the USA by Asendia USA, 17B S Middlesex Ave, Monroe NJ 08831. Periodicals postage paid New Brunswick, NJ and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to History Today, 701C Ashland Avenue, Folcroft PA 19032. Subscription records are maintained at History Today Ltd, 25 Bedford Avenue, London WC1B 3AT, UK.

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abc Total Average Net Circulation
19,551 Jan-Dec 2013



Ancient and Modern: tattooed Britons model contemporary fashions.

FROM THE EDITOR

JOSEPH BANKS, patron of the natural sciences and a president of the Royal Society, did not approve of tattoos. As a young man on Captain Cook's first great voyage into the Pacific, he was baffled by the sight of the illustrated peoples of Polynesia. Musing on the reasons for their tattoos, he observed in 1769 that:

possibly superstition may have something to do with it. Nothing else in my opinion could be a sufficient cause for so apparently absurd a custom.

Though tattoos had an aristocratic moment during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods – Jennie Churchill, Winston's mother, had a snake etched on her wrist, which she would cover up discreetly with a diamond bracelet – they were long associated in the West with criminals and sailors. At the beginning of the 20th century around 90 per cent of men serving in the Royal Navy were tattooed, usually with symbols that marked – literally – a particular rite of passage: a turtle for having passed the Equator, an anchor for crossing the Atlantic, a dragon symbolising a posting on a China station. One could track the arc of a sailor's service from his tattoos. Yet outside of ports and prisons the tattoo, in Britain at least, was a rare sighting. That is not the case today. Walking down any British high street, one is as astonished as Banks would be by the ubiquity of the tattoo, to the point where unblemished skin is more an indicator of eccentricity and rebellion than an elaborately inked limb. But the people of Britannia – the *Pretanni*, the 'painted ones' – are, whether they know it or not, returning to their roots. Marc Morris, the medieval historian, pointed this passage out to me from the 12th-century chronicler, William of Malmesbury, describing the locals on the eve of the Battle of Hastings:

The English at that time wore short garments, reaching to the mid-knee; they had their hair cropped, their beards shaven, their arms laden with gold bracelets, their skin adorned with tattooed designs. They were accustomed to eat till they became surfeited, and to drink till they were sick.

'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose', as their conquerors might have said.

Paul Lay

HistoryMatters

Translations • Intelligence • Tunisia • Empires



A Warning from History for the Google Translate Generation

The decline of language skills threatens the study of the past. And machines won't come to the rescue.

Michael Pollitt

THE UK EDUCATION system is failing to produce enough students with foreign language skills, an indispensable tool for the study of history. Research published in June this year by the Confederation of British Industry revealed that one in five schools in England had a persistently low take-up of languages, after what the government is describing as 'a decade of damaging decline'. This slump has taken its toll on the university system.

Lost in translation: illustrated Qu'ran, 12th century.

In the past 15 years more than a third of UK universities stopped offering specialist modern European language degrees, arguing that rigorous marking at A-level had deterred teenagers from studying languages at school.

The same period of time has witnessed the 'rise of the machine translators'. In 2006 Google launched its pioneering 'Google Translate' service, offering instant on-screen translations between English and Modern Standard Arabic. Today Google offers translation services in and out of more than 70 languages, meeting the needs of the monolingual student generation with ever increasing efficiency and popularity. However, the one-dimensionality of machine translation restricts the response of the on-screen polyglot to a

singular, literal definition of each word or phrase. Mistranslations across the widest cultural gulfs abound.

The problem lies in the machine's inability to consider the cultural context that gives each word its meaning. The French idiom *se taper le cul par terre*, for example, is understood by every Francophone as 'to laugh heartily' and has little to do with the literal definition offered by

Machine translation restricts the response of the on-screen polyglot to a singular, literal definition of each word or phrase

Google – 'ass banging on the floor'. The dangers inherent in this acultural approach to foreign source material did not begin with the invention of the robotic interpreter. Some of history's most ambitious translation projects have failed just as miserably to notice or bridge the cultural gap between what is said and what is meant.

The Christian preoccupation with Muslim belief, which became obsessive during the Crusades, resulted in the first European attempts to make sense of the Qu'ran. Arabic-to-Latin translation services were in no short supply. Centuries of Arab astronomy and mathematics had made Arabic-Latin bilingualism a matter of scientific necessity. Yet, whether out of ignorance or hostility, these early Christian translations were often woefully devoid of cultural understanding. In this most nuanced of subject areas, a singular or literal interpretation is often the most damaging or damning. The first western attempts to make sense of this notoriously complex source, therefore, offer some valuable lessons to the upcoming Google ▶

Translate generation.

In the Quranic account of Joseph's adventures in Egypt, for example, a certain innocuous verse describes the reaction of the Egyptian women to his beauty. In the Arabic original the verb is *akbara*, for which dictionaries carry a number of definitions primarily associated with the process of 'honouring' and 'glorifying'. Muslim translations therefore converge on variants of 'when they saw him they all admired him' or 'when they saw him they all praised him'. However, when Robert of Ketton, the first to translate the Qu'ran into Latin, came across this word in 1143, he scrolled through his lexicon with all the blinkered literalism of an automated translation service. Selecting a definition seemingly at random, he found that the verb *akbara* could also be used to describe an unrelated physiological process. The first Latin translation thus became *quo uiso omnes menstruatæ sunt* ('when they saw him they all menstruated'), a literal but improbable interpretation.

One of the Qu'ran's more controversial verses mentions a 'spirit' sent by God to assist Jesus: 'We gave Jesus clear signs and supported him with the spirit of sanctity'. The 'spirit of sanctity' (*rûh al-qudus*) is easily associated with 'the Holy Spirit' (*spiritus sanctus*). Indeed, translating the passage with Google today will yield exactly this result. The problem with this translation is the uniquely Christian sentiment that it conveys. The predominant Muslim belief is that New Testament notions of God as 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' undermine the singularity of Abrahamic monotheism. Muslim translators, therefore, commonly refuse to translate *rûh al-qudus* as 'the Holy Spirit', favouring instead variants on 'holy inspiration' or 'divine grace'. Yet in 1210 Mark of Toledo, the second Latin translator of the Qu'ran, automatically selected the words *spiritus sanctus* and thereby forced the Trinitarian theory into the mouth of its loudest critic with the same misleading literalism as can be found on Google to this day.

Another problematic Quranic verse describes what appears to be Islamic reincarnation. Literally, the verse

reads: 'How can you not believe in God? For when you were dead, he gave you life.' The idea that God brought us into life from a state of death (after, presumably, a previous life) conflicts fundamentally with the Islamic belief in one life according to which we are judged in the hereafter. The tendency among Muslim translators of the verse is, therefore, to avoid a literal reading of the words 'you were dead' at all costs, favouring instead words like 'you were nothing', 'lifeless', or 'without life'. Yet when Ludovico Marracci, the last Latin translator of the Qu'ran, came across this passage in 1698,

The 'decade of decline' in language learning and the generation of Google translators it produced threaten our understanding of foreign cultures

he automatically offered the literal interpretation, rejected by the Muslim tradition, in which God brings us into life from death: *fuiſtis mortui* ('you were dead'). He thereby proposed a culturally misleading, reincarnationist revision, which would continue for the next 250 years of non-Muslim Qu'ran translation.

The 'rise of the machine translators' therefore began long before the

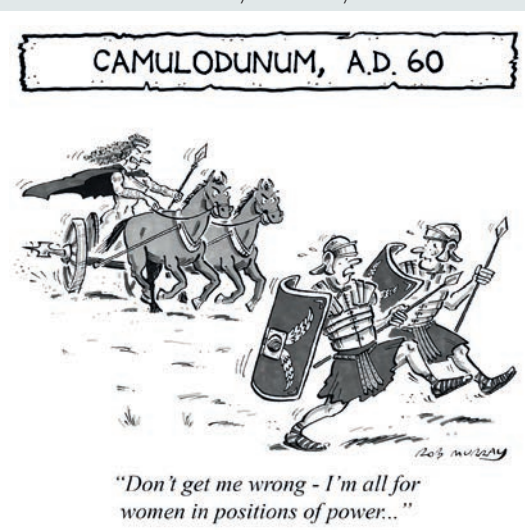
machine. Indeed, it should now be said that although, like Google Translate, these translators can rarely be faulted on their interpretation of individual words, their purpose was largely to facilitate Christian refutation and ridicule of the Qu'ran. Wilfully read at its most literal level, the Qu'ran was falsified into a Trinitarian extension of the New Testament, with some novel ideas about life after death and Joseph's effect on womankind.

These interpretations would thus provide ample fodder for generations of anti-Islamic Christian scholars, who felt no need to study Arabic themselves because literal Latin translations of the Qu'ran were readily available. When in 1311 the Council of Vienna established language schools in Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Salamanca and Rome to educate monks in Quranic refutation, their principle source for the doctrines of Islam was Robert of Ketton. Indeed, when the Latin Qu'ran came into print during the Reformation, it was this translation that was published, complete with a horrified marginal annotation beside his adaptation of the Joseph story: *o foedum et obscœnum prophetam* ('Oh the filthy and abominable prophet!'). Christian scholars seized upon the Holy Spirit's unexpected cameo in Mark of Toledo's Latin Qu'ran, arguing that the text itself validated the Trinitarian doctrine and contradicted what Muslims themselves believed.

The Church's most powerful weapons against Muslims off the battlefield were these selective literal interpretations of their written culture. The 'decade of decline' in language learning and the generation of Google translators it produced threaten our understanding of foreign cultures in just the same way. By exploring foreign source material in a cultural vacuum, the Google Translate generation risks straying just as irretrievably from the message behind the meaning behind the words. In an age of instant transnational communication, it is our ability to communicate across cultural divides that separates us from the machine translators.

Michael Pollitt is a research intern at the Legatum Institute, London.

Alternative Histories by Rob Murray



Intelligence Service

Historians gathered at Warwick this summer to celebrate the contribution of Christopher Andrew.

Andrew Lycett

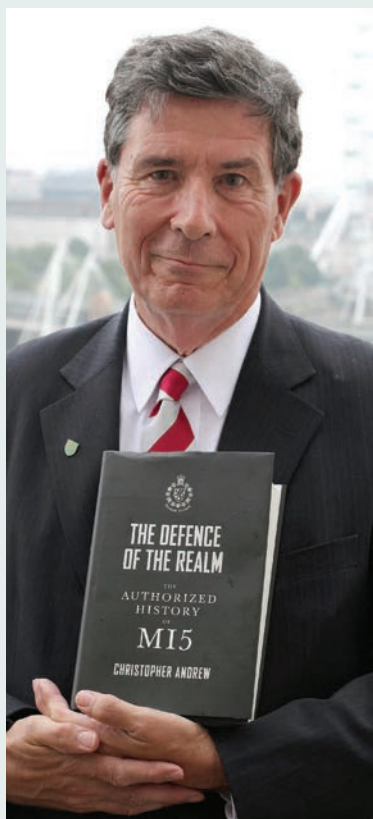
WHEN DID THE study of secret intelligence become a recognised field for historians? The consensus at a conference held at Warwick University in July was 1984, with the publication of *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* by Professor Christopher Andrew and his colleague David Dilks.

The occasion was a *festschrift* and *cohors amicorum* for Andrew, the doyen of espionage historians. It brought together former students and intelligence officers to mull over the pros and cons of throwing light on secret operations.

Arguably the wall of secrecy surrounding intelligence had been breached a decade earlier – in 1974 – when a former RAF officer, F.W. Winterbotham, published *The Ultra Secret*, the first book to provide a detailed, if flawed, account of the breaking of German Enigma codes at Bletchley Park during the Second World War. Its appearance soon led to a reappraisal of many aspects of that conflict, such as the Battle of the Atlantic.

However Andrew's and Dilks' book suggested that history could be fleshed out by hunting down details of intelligence operations in existing archives. Since then Andrew has made it his life's work to fill in that 'missing dimension'. Over the subsequent three decades he has produced a series of best-selling histories, from *Her Majesty's Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (1985) to *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5* (2008). Under his guidance, intelligence studies became one of the most popular undergraduate modules at Cambridge.

One former student of Andrew who has used secret intelligence to open up new areas of history is Calder Walton. His *Empire of Secrets*, winner of the 2013



Doyen of espionage historians: Christopher Andrew.

Under Andrew's guidance, intelligence studies became one of the most popular undergraduate modules at Cambridge

Longman-History Today book prize, presented a new take on Britain's retreat from Empire. Walton noted that in 1984 the secret services did not officially exist, so records were clearly unavailable!

Another former student, Dr Ronen Bergman, now a journalist for *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel's largest-circulation daily, talked about the problems of writing his forthcoming history of Mossad in a country where it is treasonous to hold classified documents.

With the help of 750 interviews, he managed to tease out the story. But the evidence was often conflicting. At least three ex-Mossad agents swore that they had been involved in killing a former Nazi rocket scientist, who had been recruited by the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser to build Arab missiles. But Israeli documents confirmed that he had

actually been turned and sent back to Germany as a Mossad agent.

Victor Madeira of the Institute of Statecraft has used secret intelligence to illuminate the relationship between Britain and the former Soviet Union, notably in his new book *Britannia and the Bear: The Anglo-Russian Intelligence Wars 1917-1929*. He noted how closely the strategy of the FSB, the modern Russian secret service, followed that of its predecessor, the KGB. In the Ukraine, General Sergei Beseda, head of the Fifth Directorate of the FSB, was determined to douse out any spark of an Orange revolution, creating a sense of collective amnesia through tactics such as posting conflicting messages on Twitter.

Such papers led to discussion on the practicalities of accessing intelligence material. It was argued that at least some of MI6's history could be gathered from Foreign Office and Cabinet Office files, as well as through private papers. Then there was oral testimony, which, though suspect, often helped interpret written evidence and give it colour.

Not everyone at Warwick was appreciative of what one former spook called 'the post-secrecy environment'. However, the consensus was that history was being served. Nigel West scoffed at the idea that the treachery of Americans such as Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White should have remained secret. A former member of the RUC special branch said that a historical perspective helped with the training of officers. However, Bergman struck a cautionary note when he revealed that the Mossad history department was called 'Heritage'.

Sir David Ormand, former head of GCHQ, agreed that 20 years' experience of dealing with openness had helped the security services' response to Edward Snowden's disclosures, but he felt it was 'not a good idea' to release details of which countries' codes had been read in the latter years of the Cold War; this could have ongoing operational significance.

Andrew Lycett is a biographer and former foreign correspondent.



Re-emergence:
a mosaic of
Neptune,
Carthage, first
century AD.

century. Yet, presented as works of art, on the walls as if paintings, there is no context to link them to the buildings they were created for.

Djebel Zaghouan mountain, south of Tunis, forms a dramatic backdrop to the ruins of the Temple of Water, built during Hadrian's reign (AD 117–38), at the start of the immense aqueduct, which carried water to Carthage 130 km away. Situated in a national park, the temple remains draw Tunisian families and a few toy sellers, but there is almost nothing in the vicinity to explain its historical significance. Maknine Abderahmen, a government administrator of the district, said: 'I would like there to be a museum in the area but we have other priorities. The main aim is the development of the region, then social affairs but there will be a big change after the election.'

The most recent archaeological discovery that Abderahmen is aware of is a mausoleum dating back to the second century found in 2011, close to the Roman city of Thuburbo Majus. There are currently no plans to excavate it, which is perhaps no bad thing. Only an estimated 17 per cent of Tunisia's ancient remains have officially been unearthed, yet it is reported that increasing numbers of open-air sites are being illegally excavated and raided.

One aspect of the country's heritage which seems more secure is that of music, where both pure forms of the Arab-Andalusian genre known as ma'luf and its many hybrids offer young and old the means to express distinct Tunisian identities.

Eighty years ago this year, during the French occupation, the Rashidiyya Institute was founded in Tunis to help preserve and revive the Arab-Andalusian

Emblems of the New Tunisia

The North African country is considering how best to serve its rich heritage.

Charlotte Crow

ELECTIONS WILL be held in Tunisia in October, ending the ten month 'transitional period' after the country agreed a new constitution in January. Since the uprising of 2011 and the overthrow of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia has experienced a sharp rise in unemployment and in terrorist activity, including the killing in July of 14 soldiers by jihadists in the Chaambi mountain region bordering Algeria, 'the heaviest toll suffered by the army since independence [in 1956]', according to the ministry of defence.

Tourism, Tunisia's second biggest economic sector after agriculture, slumped following the revolution and has not recovered its 2010 levels. The country is at a difficult juncture in terms of processing a past that is so engaging to outsiders. Unlike its aging political class, nearly half of Tunisia's population is under the age of 30. The issues that matter to them don't necessarily encompass a historic identity. A recent blog noted: 'Activists speak of a day when the timbers that sprouted from the soil of Ben Ali and Bourguiba, may be uprooted. When that happens, it will be the realisation of a true revolution, one that breaks with the past rather than clinging to an even more distant history.'

None of this augurs well for the country's rich archaeological heritage. The museums and ancient sites in Tunisia are in urgent need of safeguards to prevent theft and damage. Yet unlike in more conflict-ridden countries, where tourism is totally off the agenda, here there is a dichotomy between the potential to develop places of interest within an established economic sector and the demands to prioritise education, welfare and infrastructure.

Founded in the eighth century BC and probably the earliest Phoenician settlement on the North African coast, Utica became the capital of Rome's first African province in 146 BC. Cato the Younger committed suicide here a hundred years later, refusing to capitulate to Julius Caesar. Yet, in spite of its significance, Utica attracts fewer than 4,000 visitors a year. It is thus a guilty pleasure to wander in solitude through the excavated streets and houses, yet uncomfortable not to be stopped from stomping over their antique floors, like Hanno's elephants, which wrought havoc in the vicinity in c. 240 BC during the Mercenary War. Mosaic chips from the Phoenician and Roman pavements are sprinkled in the grass across the site.

The finest Roman mosaics to have been excavated from Utica, Carthage, Dougga and Souze are safely displayed at the Bardo Museum in Tunis. They present a visual record of the sophistication of the North African empire from the early Christian era to the seventh

Tunisian treasure:
the amphitheatre
at Dougga.



musical legacy. Though he had died by 1934, one of the leading protagonists of the movement behind the institute was a Bavarian-born artist, musician and scholar, Baron Rudolphe d'Erlanger (1872–1932). A French naturalised citizen, the wealthy Erlanger fell for the climate and landscape of the northern Tunisian coast. At Sidi Bou Said, overlooking the Gulf of Tunis, between 1912 and 1922 he commissioned master craftsmen from Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt to create an exquisite home, the Ennejma Ezzahra (Arabic for 'Splendid Star'), in homage to his passion for the Middle East. The baron's residence became a centre of research and musical performance, where d'Erlanger collected both instruments and musicians from across the Maghreb.

Erlanger's former home was made the Centre for Arab and Mediterranean Music by presidential mandate in 1991 under Ben Ali's ministry of culture and

Only 17 per cent of Tunisia's ancient remains have officially been unearthed, yet increasing numbers of open-air sites are being illegally excavated

heritage conservation to protect and promote Tunisian music. Some have seen these efforts and those they supersede as the actions of an elite fearful of losing a musical heritage that has usefully underpinned the foundations of Tunisian national identity. But the centre continues actively to flourish in an international capacity, holding concerts and organising courses and study days, while the Ennejma Ezzahra itself and its collection of instruments are treasures in their own right.

Earlier this year, at a ceremony at the presidential palace in Carthage held to honour Tunisian artists, the interim prime minister, Mehdi Jomaa told the assembled audience: 'We are aware of the key role of artists in building the new Tunisia' ... In the second republic, he continued, '... culture will be the emblem of intellectuals and their living consciousness'. It is unclear to what extent this vision will be accepted or upheld.

Charlotte Crow is deputy editor of *History Today*.
www.cometotunisia.co.uk; www.tunisia-live.net

Holy order:
18th-century engraving of the construction of the first Christian church in San Miguel de Piura, Peru, c.1534.



Imperial Spanish Practice

Unlike the British Empire, the vast realms of Philip II owed much to the Church.

Hugh Thomas

BRITONS ARE accustomed to think of the 'Empire' as an experience unique to themselves. But in fact all Europe's Atlantic-facing countries had their external ambitions articulated in imperial expansions. First there was Portugal, which made the Indian Ocean something like a Portuguese lake by the early 16th century. Its control of contact with the west coast of Africa was formidable and guaranteed by successive popes, who were assumed to have the deciding voice in such matters during the late Middle Ages. Spain followed, being allocated all land to the west of the Portuguese dominions. Then came France, whose mercurial monarch, Francis I, justified his involvement by the exclamation that he 'would like to see the clause in Adam's will' which excluded France from a role in the New World.

Britain was late to enter the struggle for empire, but by the early 17th century it had American colonies in territories which the Spaniards had despised because they did not seem to produce gold or silver. Holland, too, was also engaged as a great trading nation and took over some of the original Portuguese outposts. Since the New World needed a substantial labour force to produce the sugar, the tobacco and

the coffee that Europe wanted, a flourishing trade in African slaves was embarked upon. These came from East as well as West Africa and were sold or exchanged with European goods brought from such ports as Cádiz, Lisbon, Nantes, Middleburg and Bristol. This trade now seems an iniquity but the slaves were mostly sold by African kings, noblemen or merchants, not kidnapped by European captains. The Portuguese were the most important traders, for they had ample demands in Brazil, which became the richest of their dominions.

The British Empire was characterised in North America at least by emigrants seeking to escape religious orthodoxy at home. The Spanish empire in the centre and south of the Americas was concerned to impose a religious orthodoxy of its own, based on the unreformed but vigorous Catholic Church. What strikes us most in reflecting on the nature of the conquests by Spain is that the Church provided an all-embracing ideology for the Spanish expansion. It is typical that for a time in the early 16th century the empire's supreme authority, established on the island of Santo Domingo with powers throughout the Caribbean, was vested in three Jeronimite priors.

Hugh Thomas' latest book, *World Without End: The Global Empire of Philip II*, is published by Allen Lane.

MonthsPast SEPTEMBER

By Richard Cavendish

SEPTEMBER 8TH 1664

New Amsterdam surrendered to the English

New York City started its glittering history in a modest way as the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam. The story begins in 1609 when Henry Hudson, an English sea captain working for Dutch merchants, was trying to find a north-west passage to Asia. Exploring along the Atlantic seaboard of North America, he came to the island of Manhattan and then sailed north for 150 miles or so up the river later named after him. Returning to Europe, he reported that there was a good prospect of profitable trading in furs there and in 1614 the Dutch established a trading post called Fort Nassau, later Fort Orange, near today's city of Albany.

The post had only a tiny Dutch population of some 50 traders and soldiers, but Dutch ships sailed regularly up the Hudson to collect furs and more Dutch expeditions explored the area, which became the colony of New Netherland, run by the Dutch West India Company. In 1625 the company founded New Amsterdam at the southern tip of Manhattan Island as the colony's capital and seat of government, with a fort to protect it and guard the harbour and the precious fur cargoes against English or French raids. Peter Minuit of the Dutch West India Company, who was in charge from 1626, decided to buy Manhattan Island from a group of local Indians for goods worth 60 Dutch guilders, which later legend valued at US\$24. It has been rated the best real estate deal in history.

As well as Dutch families, in time Jews, French Huguenots and other Europeans settled in New Amsterdam, which became a busy trading centre between North America, the Caribbean and Europe. Settlers started farming Manhattan Island, imported black Africans as slave labourers and began farming further up the Hudson Valley,



on Long Island and across the river in today's New Jersey.

A new colonial governor, Peter Stuyvesant, arrived to take charge in New Amsterdam in 1647. A former army officer and a commanding figure, he had previously governed the Caribbean island of Curaçao, where he lost his right leg to an enemy cannonball and had to limp about on a wooden leg for the rest of his life. The story goes that if anyone opposed him he would angrily stamp his wooden leg and bellow at them. He was a convinced Calvinist, hostile to Quakers, Lutherans and all other species of Protestants, and tried to have Jews and those who did not belong to the Dutch Reformed Church banned from the colony, but the company persistently overruled him. His arrogant ways did not make him popular, as time would tell.

The English had been building up their own trade with the New World, founding their own colonies in Virginia and New England. Some English from New England had infiltrated onto Long Island. Charles II decided to seize New Netherland, take over the valuable fur trade and give the colony to his younger brother James, Duke of York and Albany (the future James II). The

details vary from one account to another, but on August 27th, 1664 three or perhaps four English warships carrying 300 or maybe 450 English soldiers arrived at New Amsterdam. Their commander was Richard Nicolls, who had been a cavalry commander on the Royalist side in the English Civil Wars and was now a trusted subordinate of the Duke of York. He sent a letter to Stuyvesant demanding New Amsterdam's surrender and promising to protect the lives, property and freedom of

all who accepted English rule. Stuyvesant tore the letter to shreds and ordered preparations for resistance, but it soon became all too clear that few of the city's inhabitants had any intention of risking life and limb against the English and, indeed, the New English in Long Island were getting ready to fight on the English side.

Stuyvesant accepted the situation and early in September surrendered New Amsterdam to the English and swore allegiance to the Crown. Nicolls took over as governor-general of New Netherland and handled matters tactfully, shrewdly and to the general satisfaction of the colony's people. New Amsterdam was renamed New York City and New Netherland became New York State. Stuyvesant went to the Netherlands to report in 1665 and then returned to New York City, where he spent his remaining years quietly at his farm, which was called the Bouwerij and left its name to the street now called the Bowery. When he died in 1672 he was buried there, at St Mark's Church. The bust of him in the church was presented by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in 1912. The nearby Stuyvesant Street, Stuyvesant Square and the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn bear his name.

We'll take Manhattan: a plan of New Amsterdam, 1661.

SEPTEMBER 4TH 1964

Opening of the Forth Road Bridge

Two of Britain's most stunning and eye-catching bridges run side by side across the Firth of Forth from South Queensferry, outside Edinburgh, to North Queensferry on the opposite bank. The river at this point narrows to rather more than a mile wide. The name Queensferry refers to St Margaret of Scotland, the English queen of Malcolm III of Scots from 1070, who established a ferry across the Firth to take pilgrims from Edinburgh to two of Scotland's most notable religious sites, St Andrews and Dunfermline in Fife. When the queen died in Edinburgh in 1093 her body was taken across the river on the ferry to be buried in Dunfermline Abbey.

For eight centuries the ferry did duty as a regular passenger service, one of the world's oldest, but in 1883 work began on construction of the Forth Bridge, which carries the railway across the Firth on three massive cantilevers made of hollow steel tubes, linked by steel spans.



Its principal creator was the English engineer Sir Benjamin Baker and, although William Morris peevishly condemned it as 'the supremest specimen of all ugliness', it has been generally admired ever since as an engineering marvel and a wonder of the world. It has majesty.

Close to 5,000 men worked on the bridge at the peak of the construction process. It was a dangerous job and getting on for a hundred men were killed during it. Completed in 1890, it was opened by the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII), who drove in the final rivet, which was

Twin triumphs:
the Forth Road Bridge (right) and the Forth Bridge, 1964.

made of gold. It was then the longest bridge in the world and it inspired the popular legend that repainting it every year took so long that the job was no sooner finished than it had to start again. Altogether the bridge used 58,000 tons of steel and more than eight million rivets. It cost what was then an astonishing £3 million.

The Forth Road Bridge, just to the west, is another triumph, a gracefully soaring suspension bridge. An alterna-

tive plan for a tunnel was dropped and work on the bridge started in 1958. It was opened almost exactly six years later by Queen Elizabeth II. The bridge was designed by two firms of civil engineers, Mott, Hay and Anderson with Freeman Fox and Partners. The cost of construction was £11.5 million, the cost in lives seven. The main towers are over 500ft high and on completion it was the world's fourth longest suspension bridge. The bridge's 250 millionth vehicle drove across it in 2009 and it carries more than 20 million vehicles a year.

SEPTEMBER 14TH 1939

Lord Haw-Haw's first broadcast

William Brooke Joyce was born in 1906 in the United States to an Irish family, which settled in England in 1921, when he was 15. He was soon enmeshed in far-right British politics. In 1933 he joined Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, but Mosley was not antisemitic enough for him and in 1937 Joyce founded his own National Socialist League.

In August 1939, with war looming, Joyce and his wife Margaret fled Britain for Berlin, where he joined the German English-language propaganda broadcasting service. In September a *Daily Express* journalist coined the nickname Lord Haw-Haw for the broadcasters in 'English of the haw-haw, dammit-get-out-of-my-way variety'. Joyce liked it and soon made it his own personal property.

Very few people in Britain believed a word Lord Haw-Haw said and his effect

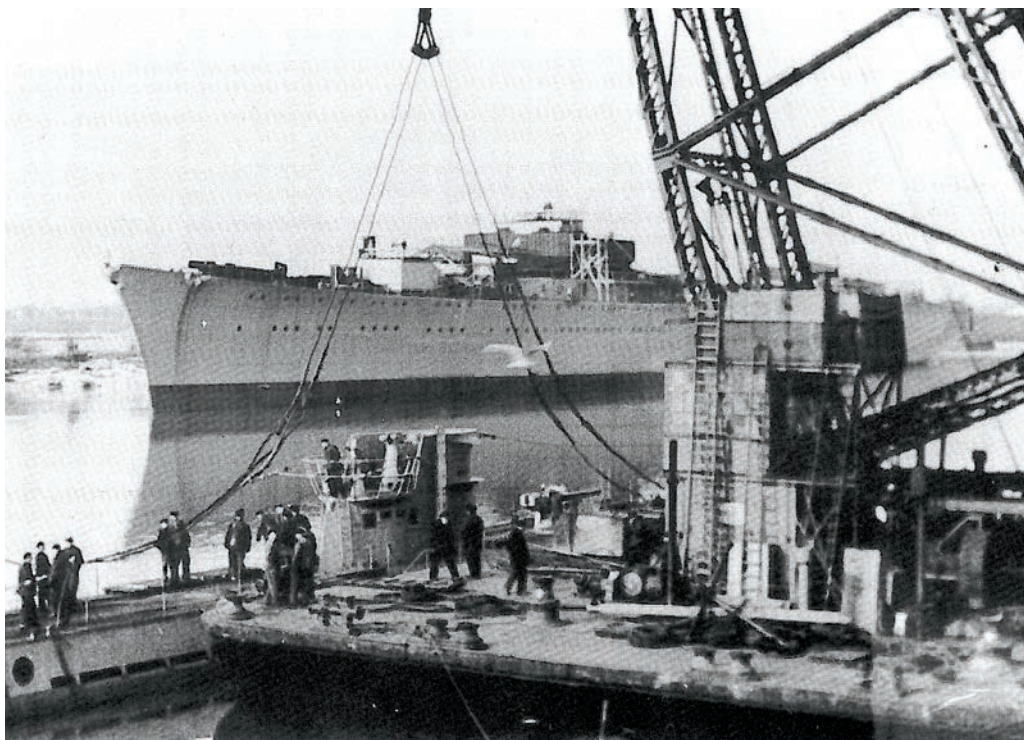
His masters' voice:
Joyce satirised on a British postcard of 1942.



on British morale was virtually nil, but there were many who enjoyed listening to him. As Mary Kenny explained in her brilliant biography *Germany Calling* (2004), Haw-Haw had an engaging

sense of humour, which was a commodity in rare supply on the BBC of those grim and anxious days. BBC broadcasting was ponderously boring, but Joyce came across as a striking personality and Joseph Goebbels, in charge of the German propaganda effort, described him as 'the best horse in my stable'. Margaret Joyce also gave pro-Nazi talks in English on the wireless.

With the war lost, Joyce and Margaret tried to hide, but his popularity in Britain proved to be his undoing and he was arrested by British soldiers when one of them recognised his voice. Taken back to England, he was tried for high treason in London in September 1945. The trial was over in three days and the jury found him guilty. Margaret was not prosecuted, perhaps because to protect her Joyce had gallantly made a deal with the authorities not to reveal certain matters that could have embarrassed British intelligence. He was hanged in Wandsworth Prison on January 3rd, 1946 at the age of 39.



Under Two Flags

Roger Moorhouse tells the story of the *Lützow*, a partly built German cruiser delivered to the Soviet Union in 1940 and renamed the *Petropavlovsk*, following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939.

ON THE LAST DAY of May 1940 a peculiar sight appeared in the approaches to Leningrad. A German heavy cruiser was being towed into a shipyard on the western edge of the city. There was no bunting, no military band and little ceremony. No mention was made of the arrival in the Soviet press; instead the newspapers *Izvestia* and *Leningradskaya Pravda* reported the Anglo-French collapse at the other end of the Continent in studiously neutral tones. Consequently, the huge grey monster attracted little attention as it was nudged and cajoled into place by puffing black tugs. Nonetheless, its arrival was an event of profound significance.

The ship was the *Lützow*. Named in honour of Ludwig Freiherr von Lützow – one of the Prussian heroes of the German wars of liberation, who had raised a citizens' militia in 1813 to fight alongside the Russians against the French – she had been constructed in Bremen and launched in July

The Lützow under construction at the Deschimag yard in Bremen.

1939. As one of the Admiral Hipper class of five heavy battlecruisers built by the Nazis in the 1930s, it was larger and heavier than Germany's famed 'pocket battleships'; over 200 metres from stem to stern, with a displacement of just under 20,000 tonnes. In finished form the *Lützow* would be powered by three Blohm & Voss steam turbines, boast a top speed of 32 knots and carry a crew of over 1,300. Its main armament would consist of four 20.3 cm (8-inch) twin gun turrets, each weighing approximately 250 tons, with an effective range of around 33km. It was now the largest and most modern vessel in the Soviet fleet.

For all its impressive pedigree, however, what the few Leningraders watching the ship arrive in 1940 would have noticed was that the *Lützow* was not finished. In fact, despite its sleek lines and impressive size, it looked rather unlike a warship, with little completed superstructure above deck level, only two of the four main turrets were



A cartoon by Kem marking the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact.

installed and there was no anti-aircraft armament. Below decks the vessel was similarly unfinished, most critically lacking a propulsion system. Indeed, if the time taken to fit out the *Lützow*'s sister ships was any guide, it would not be ready for commissioning for at least another year. But, despite such shortcomings, the transfer into Soviet hands was a remarkable event. For one thing, the Admiral Hipper class had originally been devised by German engineers to meet the threat posed by the Soviet Kirov class of battle-cruiser, which had first been launched in 1936. So, if nothing else, there was a certain irony in the *Lützow*'s delivery to Leningrad.

Moreover, the German navy was not exactly awash with capital ships in the summer of 1940. Alongside its four battleships – the *Bismarck*, the *Tirpitz*, the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst* – it possessed only two smaller 'pocket battleships', the *Deutschland* and the *Admiral Scheer*, the

third of that *Deutschland* class, the *Graf Spee*, having been scuttled in the South Atlantic the previous winter. Of the five heavy cruisers, the *Blücher* had been sunk a few weeks earlier, after succumbing to shellfire in Oslofjord during the Norwegian campaign; the *Seydlitz* and the *Prinz Eugen* were still unfinished; and the *Lützow* was now being handed over to the Soviets, thus leaving only the *Admiral Hipper* in German service. Given that Hitler had only seven capital ships at

The idea of an economic arrangement between Berlin and Moscow was one that had long mesmerised politicians and economists on both sides

his disposal, many Germans might have concluded that the delivery of the *Lützow* to the Soviets was an act of foolhardy generosity.

Officially, however, the sale of the *Lützow* was trumpeted as a significant step in the improvement of Nazi-Soviet relations; a symbol, in hardened Krupp steel, of a new age of détente and co-operation between Europe's two primary totalitarian powers. Beyond the symbolism, it was the headline transaction in a burgeoning commercial relationship between Moscow and Berlin, which had

accompanied the signature of the Nazi-Soviet Pact the previous August. Indeed, as the *Lützow* was eased into its berth at the Baltic Shipyard, German and Soviet representatives were busy finalising a raft of commercial deals covering the supply of all manner of raw materials and finished goods.

The idea of an economic arrangement between Berlin and Moscow was one that had long mesmerised politicians and economists on both sides. The two were a natural fit; industrialised Germany had an insatiable need for raw materials, while resource-rich Russia sought assistance in industrialising. When the political stars had aligned, as after the Rapallo Pact of 1922, the two countries had enjoyed a mutually-beneficial relationship and it is highly significant that the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 was preceded by a commercial agreement signed a few days earlier. That August, Stalin and Hitler had found that they were on strategic common ground in confronting the 'imperialists' of

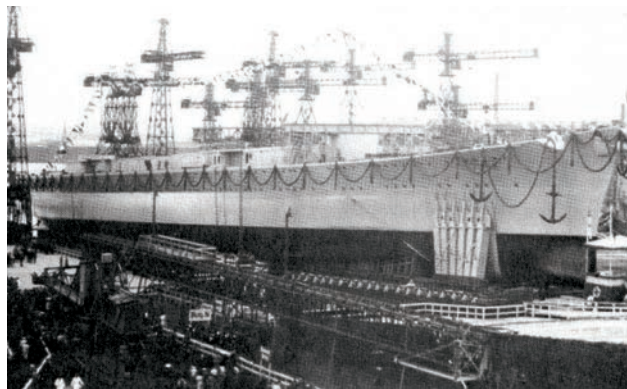


The Soviet foreign minister Molotov reviews a guard of honour in Berlin with his German counterpart Ribbentrop on his right, November 1940.

the West, but – for Stalin at least – it was the economic arrangement with Berlin that had been decisive.

The German-Soviet trade agreement, which preceded the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by three days, established a credit facility of 200 million Reichsmarks and envisaged 300 million Reichsmarks of bilateral trade – Soviet raw materials for German technology – in a deal scheduled to last for seven years. Though often neglected or overshadowed by its political counterpart, economics played an essential role in the new Nazi-Soviet relationship, offering Germany the chance to avoid the worst effects of any wartime British blockade, and giving the Soviet Union the opportunity to modernise, learning from one of the most advanced industrial economies in the world.

SUCH WAS ITS importance that the first trade treaty was swiftly augmented by a revised commercial agreement the following February, which more than quadrupled the total figures already agreed and committed both sides to additional exports to the value of 650 million Reichsmarks each. It was, the Nazi press swooned, more important ‘than a battle won’. Stalin concurred, declaring that the agreement was no mere trade treaty, it was one of ‘mutual assistance’, thereby rather undermining his declared position of neutrality in the ongoing war.



The *Lützow* decorated in preparation for its launch on July 1st, 1939.

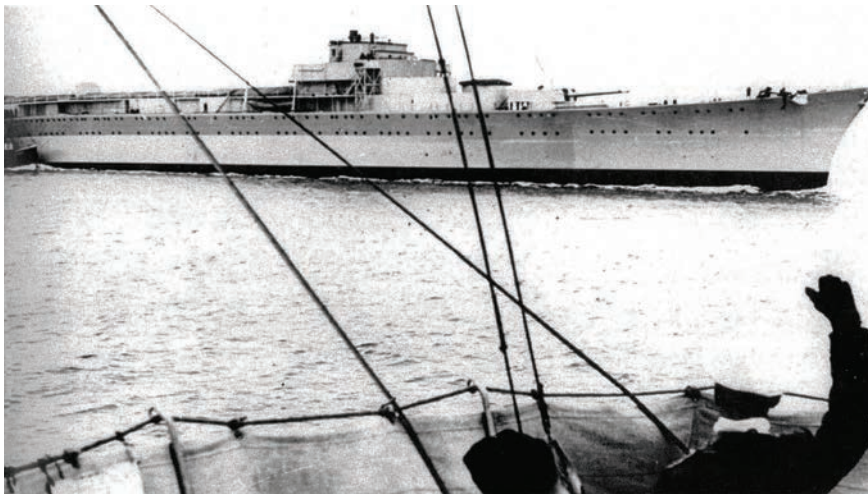
The figures proposed in the revised agreement were certainly impressive: the Soviet Union, for instance, committed to supply one million tons of grain, 900,000 tons of petroleum, 800,000 tons of scrap and pig iron, 500,000 tons of phosphates, 500,000 tons of iron ore with lesser amounts of platinum, chromium ore, asbestos, sulphur, iridium, iodine, glycerine, albumin, tar, lime and numerous other products.

German counter-deliveries, meanwhile, were set out in four separate lists, the first of which, concerning military equipment, ran to 42 typewritten pages and encompassed everything from submarine periscopes and hydrographic instruments to complete tanks and aircraft, including Messerschmitt Bf-109E fighters, Junkers Ju-88 and Dornier Do-215 bombers, half-tracks, prototype helicopters and one ‘fully-equipped’ Panzer Mk III. The other lists covered sundry military and industrial supplies and included equipment for the mining, chemical and petroleum industries, turbines, forges, presses, cranes, machine tools, locomotives, generators, diesel engines, 146 excavators and a number of ships, including a 12,000-ton tanker, which was to be delivered ‘promptly’.

One of the first items on that Soviet ‘shopping list’ was the heavy cruiser that was already being referred to by the Germans as the ‘ex-Lützow’. According to the agreement it was ‘to be delivered for completion in the USSR’,

accompanied by 'all equipment, armament [and] spare parts', as well as 'complete plans, specifications, working drawings and trial results'. As with many other categories, the negotiations that led to the sale of the vessel had been rather complex. The Soviets had first requested the ship in early November 1939, along with the similarly unfinished *Seydlitz*. Then, at the end of that month, the stakes had been raised higher when the *Prinz Eugen* was added to the list of Soviet demands, as well as the plans for the battleship *Bismarck*. The matter was referred to Hitler, who vetoed the sale of the *Seydlitz* and the *Prinz Eugen*, but agreed to the sale of the *Bismarck* plans, on condition that they would not be permitted to fall into the 'wrong' (i.e. British) hands.

With a green light for the sale of the *Lützow*, the two sides could begin haggling over price. An initial suggestion from Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring of 152 million Reichsmarks, nearly twice the cost of construction, was dismissed by the Soviets out of hand. Thereafter, negotiations dragged on until early May 1940, at which point a renewed German proposal of 109 million Reichsmarks for



the cruiser and ammunition was immediately met with a Soviet counter offer of 90 million Reichsmarks. Just as Germany's forces were invading France and the Low Countries, it seems the negotiators tired of haggling and opted to split the difference, agreeing a price of 100 million Reichsmarks for the ship; nearly one sixth of the agreed German export total.

Yet, if the two sides imagined that what would follow would be plain sailing, they were mistaken. As in most aspects of this benighted alignment, signature of the agreement was just the opening shot in a tortuous saga of negotiations that sought to put the theory of economic collaboration into practice in an atmosphere of endemic mutual mistrust. Both Moscow and Berlin were equally to blame, each essentially viewing itself as the dominant partner in the relationship and consequently seeking to drive as hard a bargain as possible. The Soviets proved to be the tougher negotiators, bolstered by the mistaken belief that the Germans needed them more than vice versa. Consequently they routinely inflated their own prices while driving down those of their German partners. The

sum for consignments of German hard coal, for instance, was pushed so low that Moscow was able to sell much of it on to its neighbours at a healthy profit. Its own deliveries of oil, meanwhile, were inflated by up to 50 per cent beyond the industry standard Gulf Price, while the price of Soviet manganese mysteriously rose by 75 per cent between 1938 and 1940. For Communists, Stalin's negotiators certainly demonstrated a solid understanding of the fundamentals of capitalism.

THERE WERE OTHER problems. The staggered nature of the arrangement, whereby Soviet raw material exports were followed by later German deliveries of technology and finished goods, inevitably gave rise to complaints, mainly on the Soviet side, about suspected foot-dragging. One such dispute concerned the *Lützow*'s missing turrets and a Soviet delegation was duly dispatched to Essen in 1940 to confront the manufacturer, the German steel magnate Gustav Krupp von Bohlen. After complaining about the slow progress of the assembly of the guns and accusing Krupp of 'violating the schedule', the Soviets were told that the delays were due to 'forces beyond our control'. Blaming the war and Anglo-French intransigence, Krupp protested that he was doing his 'patriotic duty' in supplying the Wehrmacht first of all, though he promised to look into the Soviet complaints, pledging to finish work on the *Lützow* as soon as the *Prinz Eugen* had been completed. Needless to say, the turrets were never delivered.

Spying was another obstacle. Although the Germans appear largely to have desisted, perhaps suspecting that there was little benefit to be gained from spying on their partner's often primitive industrial installations, the Soviets seem to have viewed the economic relationship with Berlin as a golden opportunity for some military-industrial espionage. Soviet delegations in Germany, therefore, soon gained a reputation for off-limits snooping, so much

so that those visiting the Krupp plant found large areas of the workshops hidden from view behind vast sheets of tarpaulin.

Ensnconed in her berth in Leningrad, the *Lützow* was also not immune. As Nikita Khrushchev related in his postwar memoir, the German rear-admiral Otto Feige, who had been sent to Leningrad to oversee the job of fitting it out, naturally attracted the attentions of the Soviet intelligence service. A 'honey-trap' was prepared for him, involving, as Khrushchev delicately put it, a 'young lovely', an 'indecent pose' and some photographic equipment. Yet, despite the ensuing scandal, which so enraged the puritanical Hitler that he raised it with the head of the NKVD, Lavrenti Beria, Moscow failed to recruit Feige, as the brazen admiral evidently 'couldn't have cared less' about his indiscretion.

By the time that Feige was being 'compromised', in the autumn of 1940, the economic relationship between Berlin and Moscow was already in trouble. Endless rounds of exhaustive negotiations, which it seemed were only broken when Stalin temporarily found cause to ingratiate himself ▶

The *Lützow* is towed into Leningrad in May 1940.

From the Archive

More on the
Nazi-Soviet
Pact

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with the Germans, had soured what little trust had been allowed to develop.

For Germany, the trade agreements with Moscow, which had promised so much, were proving hugely frustrating. Milking Soviet natural resources had turned into something akin to getting blood out of a stone. And, far from oiling the wheels of Hitler's war machine, it seemed that the connection to the Soviet economy was proving to be more of a hindrance, with every delivery dogged by delays, squabbles and endless prevarication. Also, crucially for Berlin, more generous, less capricious trading partners had in the meantime been found elsewhere: in Sweden and Romania, for example, whose deliveries of iron ore and oil, respectively, quickly dwarfed those coming from the USSR. In an economic sense, therefore, the relationship with Stalin became less and less vital to Hitler as time went on.



Above: German customs take over a delivery of grain from Soviet train attendants. Right: French caricature of the trade agreement, August 1939.

THE SOVIETS were a little more positive. Having been promised the short cut to a modern industrial economy, they had generally done rather well out of the deal, retooling many new factories with German-made hardware and benefiting from some of the latest examples of German industrial technology. It was not all positive, however. Soviet buyers had been unimpressed by much of the military equipment that they had been shown and had not been permitted to see the latest technology, such as the prototype jet engines then under development at Junkers. They had, meanwhile, been sold ten examples of the Heinkel He-100 fighter – about which Berlin had made grand claims – only to discover that it was fundamentally unsuited to combat and had not even been adopted by the Luftwaffe.

The greatest debit on the Soviet balance sheet, however, was the *ex-Lützow*. At the end of September 1940, though only two-thirds completed and moored in her dock in Leningrad, the ship was formally incorporated into the Red Navy and given the name *Petropavlovsk*, commemorating a Russian victory against the British and the French in the Crimean War. However, in a microcosm of the wider problems, the cautious co-operation on board the ship between German and Soviet crew and engineers had all but collapsed, with interminable haggling effectively paralysing any genuine progress on finishing the vessel.

Much of the wrangling was rather mundane, centring on training regimes or translation costs. For instance, the Soviets requested that instruction of their crews should be carried out in Russian and demanded that specialist officers should be sent to German factories for tuition. They also suggested that a Red Navy training team should be permitted to serve aboard the *Admiral Hipper*. Mindful of the widespread suspicions of systematic Soviet espionage and unwilling to accommodate Moscow's demands without reciprocity, Berlin unsurprisingly refused.



Le national-socialisme tourne le dos aux Russes...
... de cette façon !...

As work on the *Petropavlovsk* stalled, the relationship, which had been tentative at best, soured further. When an article appeared in *Izvestia* in October 1940 outlining the historical background of a number of Soviet warships, including the *Petropavlovsk*, the vessel's German origins were strangely not mentioned. The cynic might have surmised that the Nazi-Soviet Pact was already being airbrushed out of history.

Late in 1940, however, a curious shift occurred. Just as Hitler was privately calling time on the pact with Moscow,

A new agreement was signed, which was hailed by a senior German negotiator as 'the greatest agreement that Germany had ever concluded'



A Soviet engineer checks the level of oil on its way to Germany, c.1940.



A Soviet train arriving at a transition station, where the freight was transferred to German trucks with different track gauges, c.1940.

giving the order on December 18th to start military planning for Operation Barbarossa, Stalin began using economics to woo his German partner, freeing up the torturous negotiations and finally permitting genuine progress to be made. In December a Nazi-Soviet Tariff and Toll treaty was signed, followed by a new commercial agreement in January 1941, which was hailed by the normally sober senior German negotiator, Karl Schnurre, as 'the greatest agreement that Germany had ever concluded'. Only at this point, then, did the economic relationship belatedly come close to realising its potential. In the first half of 1941, trade between Berlin and Moscow duly flourished, with fully one third of the total of contracted German exports to the USSR being transacted, while from April to June alone the Soviets exported over half a million tons of grain in the opposite direction, a third of their total for that commodity.

As the politicisation that had previously conspired to

hinder progress finally served to spur it on, the Nazi-Soviet economic relationship enjoyed something of a swan song. Even the *Petropavlovsk* shared in the momentary enthusiasm, with Berlin making renewed promises to deliver the missing turrets and agreeing that instructors would be dispatched to Leningrad in the summer of 1941 to provide training to the ship's Soviet crew.

In addition, in May 1941, the Soviets made a list of further requests regarding the *Petropavlovsk*, for instance demanding that power systems be installed in August, and that control and communications systems be supplied by October. Little practical co-operation would be forthcoming, however, and in June Admiral Kuznetsov informed a curiously unconcerned Stalin that deliveries of parts for the vessel had inexplicably halted.

WHEN WAR finally came, that summer, the unfinished German cruiser was inevitably pressed into service in the defence of the Soviet Union's second city. Though it was not yet seaworthy, the vessel nonetheless had two of her four main turrets installed and so could be used as a floating battery when the Wehrmacht approached the city in late August. On September 7th the *Petropavlovsk* – built by German labour in Bremen – opened fire on approaching German troops, firing around 700 German shells from her Krupp turrets. Ten days later, German artillery in turn found its range and hit the cruiser with 53 rounds, causing her to sink, bow first, in the shallow waters of the Leningrad coal harbour.

It was a fitting end. The *Petropavlovsk/Lützow* had been, in many ways, the very symbol of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Intended to signify a new era of collaboration, she had become a sorry symptom of a relationship whose potential, thankfully, would never be realised. Ambitious in conception, but half-finished, mired in political machinations and hamstrung by endemic mutual mistrust, the ship's story mirrored that of the wider strategic relationship almost perfectly. Like the pact, the ship met its end in that brutal summer of 1941, and – like the pact – it was subsequently erased from history. If Hitler and Stalin had wanted a flagship for their joint venture between 1939 and 1941, they could not have wished for a better candidate.

Roger Moorhouse is a historian specialising in modern German and Central European history. He is the author of *Berlin at War* (Vintage, 2011).

FURTHER READING

Roger Moorhouse, *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin 1939–41* (Bodley Head, 2014).

Tobias Philbin III, *The Lure of Neptune: German-Soviet Naval Collaboration and Ambitions, 1919–41* (University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

InFocus

Schmiedhammer Fritz

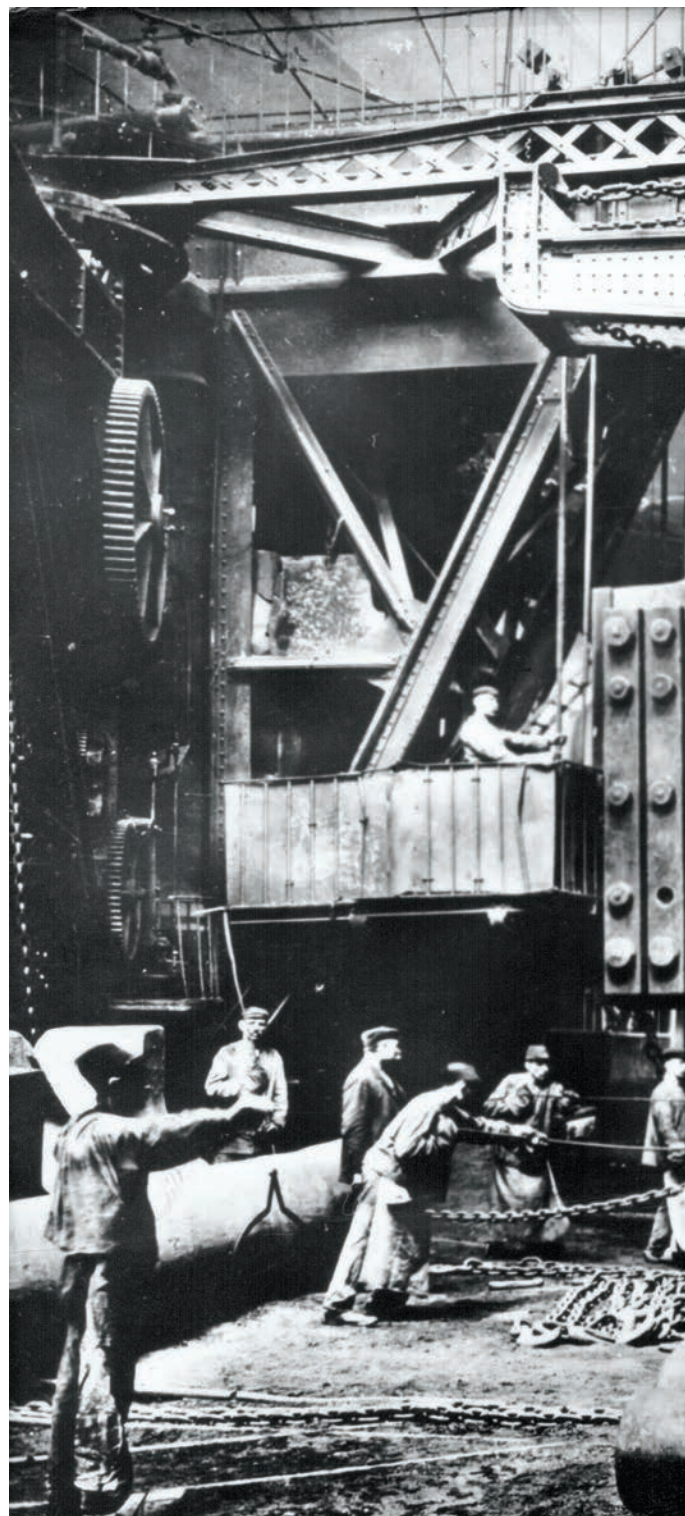
A LENGTH OF white-hot metal is manoeuvred under the largest steam hammer in the Krupp works at Essen, in 1861. This is the *Schmiedhammer Fritz*, named after Alfred Krupp's son and symbolic not only of a new industrial force arrived in the Ruhr but of a new determination within Prussia to create a commanding place for itself within Europe.

In 1851 Krupp's stand at Britain's Great Exhibition was a sensation: not only was there a six-pounder cast-steel cannon, something entirely new, but there was also a solid steel ingot weighing 2,000 kilos. Before this, steel had only been produced in modest quantities. Just as important was his introduction of a non-weld railway tyre, because they, together with rails, axles and springs, were to provide the cash flow that paid for armaments research and development. In 1854 there was a Krupp 12-pounder at the Paris Exhibition, which impressed Napoleon III, though not his

It was not until Wilhelm I became ruler of Prussia in 1861 that Krupp's cannons began to be taken seriously

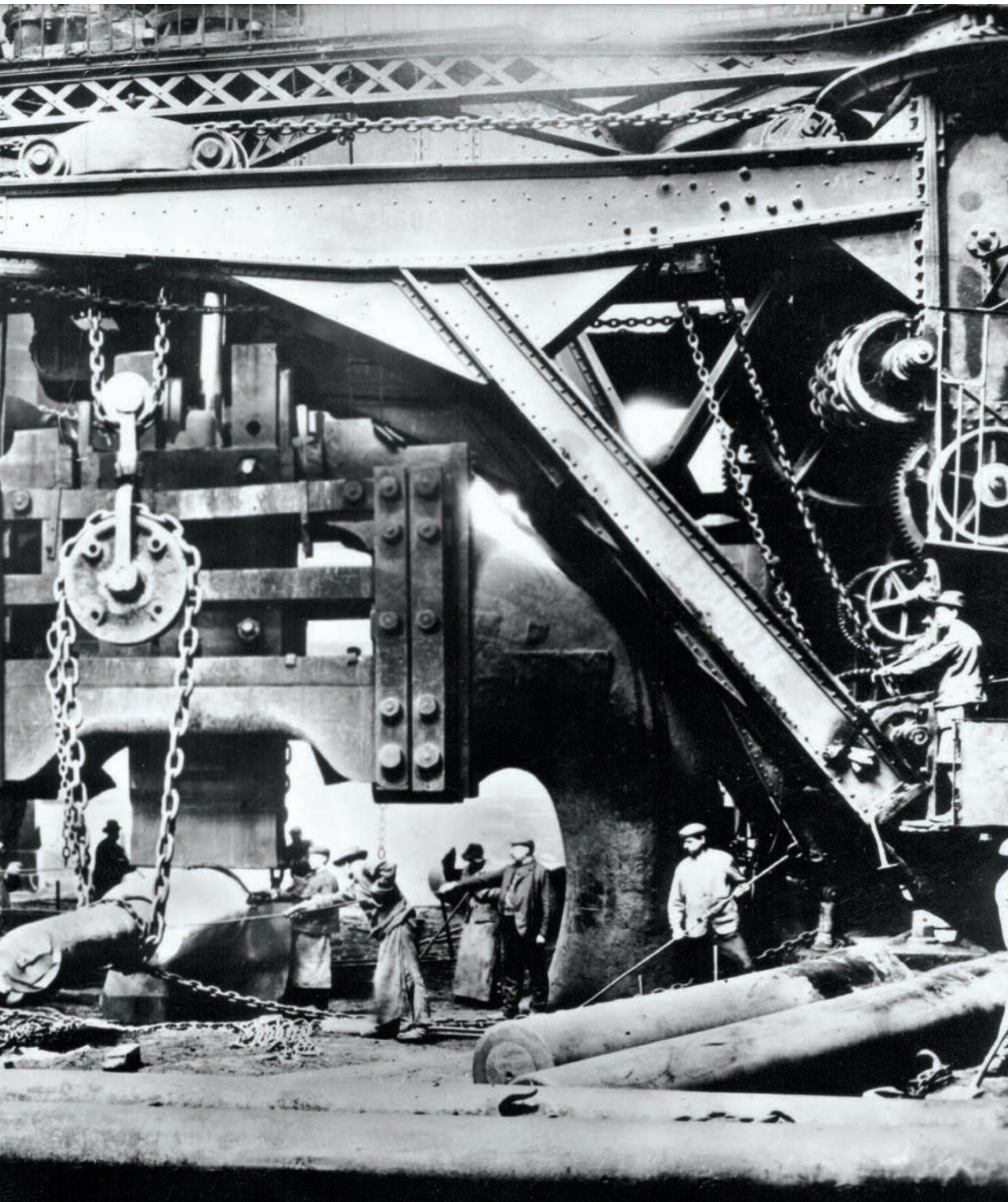
generals. It was not until Wilhelm I became ruler of Prussia in 1861 that Krupp's cannons began to be taken seriously. Wilhelm had been aware of a changing balance following the French victory over Austria in Italy in 1859, which brought Austria's position as the leading German power into question. That year he visited the Krupp works and an order for 312 steel cannon for his army soon followed, as did an expansion of conscription. Here were two ingredients for the unification of Germany; the third was the appointment of Bismarck as chief minister in 1862.

Krupp guns played little part in Germany's conflict with Denmark in 1864, while their performance in the Seven Weeks War against Austria in 1866 was patchy. There was too much phosphorus in German iron ore for Krupp's new Bessemer converters to produce good steel from it and there were defects in the design of the company's breech block, after which Krupp suffered a nervous collapse. Yet enough of the Prussian high command remained faithful to the



Kanonenkönig (the Cannon King), the defect in the breeches was cured and he eventually replaced pre-1866 guns with 400 new ones at no charge. When the Franco-Prussian War came in 1870 the French brass muzzle-loaders were no match for them, while Krupp heavy mortars smashed the fortifications at Metz and Sedan.

The steam hammer, which allowed much larger objects to be forged than with the traditional tilt hammer, was one



of Britain's many gifts to the world during the first heroic stage of the Industrial Revolution. James Nasmyth, one of a generation of outstanding mechanical engineers trained in the London workshops of Henry Maudslay, drew up the first designs for one in 1840, but a deft piece of French industrial espionage meant the first to be built was at the Schneider ironworks at Le Creusot. The manager there had been shown Nasmyth's drawings on a visit to his works in

Manchester and then produced his own derived from them. After Nasmyth saw the French machine in 1842, he came home and built his own. He marketed it more successfully than the French did and by 1856 he could retire. He had designed it so that a paddle-shaft for Brunel's ship, the *SS Great Britain*, could be forged, only for Brunel eventually to opt for screw-propulsion rather than paddle wheels.

ROGER HUDSON



James Joseph Sylvester, by George Patten in 1841.

Patricia Rothman celebrates the 200th anniversary of the birth of the brilliant James Joseph Sylvester, whose ambitions to be recognised as a professional mathematician were hindered by the religious restrictions of the age.

A Brain on *Fire*

THOSE WHO VALUE THE versatility of their computers and tablets, who rely on encryption to keep their data confidential and who speculate how quantum states in physics are calculated might be unaware of the man whose work made all these advances possible. James Joseph Sylvester, who lived against the backdrop of the radical social changes of the 19th century, coined the terms 'invariant' (describing mathematical characteristics that do not change under transformations), 'matrix' and other mathematical terms. He developed matrix algebra and made significant advances in number theory and many branches of mathematics. His ambition seems modest by today's standards; he wanted to be a pro-

fessional mathematician. He wished to have time to use his creative mind, to be able to teach in a stimulating environment and to live as a gentleman. This might have been a reasonable expectation for someone born into a comfortable middle-class family and possessed of an extraordinary brain, but there was an obstacle: Sylvester's family were Jewish and he refused to compromise his Judaism.

James was born in London on September 3rd, 1814, the youngest of nine children of Abraham and Miriam Joseph. An elder brother, Sylvester, emigrated to New York in 1826 and became a lottery agent under the name of Sylvester Joseph Sylvester. Thereafter all the brothers eventually took the surname Sylvester. ►

When he was six years old James' parents sent him to the first private boarding school for Jewish boys in Highgate. The curriculum was traditionally Jewish, with Hebrew and biblical studies taught along with secular subjects, such as Latin, Greek and mathematics. The school was aimed at the sons of the Anglo-Jewish elite, who were to be educated to value their Jewish identity as well as to interact on an equal educational footing with their fellow Englishmen. When James was 11 the new headmaster, Leopold Neumegen, a mathematician, was so impressed with the boy's ability that he arranged for Olinthus Gregory, the professor of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, to examine him in algebra. Gregory recognised James' remarkable ability and continued to take an interest in his mathematical progress.

Around this time moves were being made to establish a new university in London, free from the religious restrictions of the two ancient English universities. At Cambridge a student had to sign the 39 Articles of Faith before receiving a degree, while at Oxford no one was even admitted to study without first signing this document. These restrictions debarred Jews, Catholics and other nonconformists from a university education in England. The new university, named London University College (now University College London), removed these restrictions. It was founded in 1826 by a group of liberals, including the Scottish lawyer and future lord chancellor, Sir Henry Brougham (later Lord Brougham), and a Jewish financier, (later Sir) Isaac Lyon Goldsmid. Among others, Olinthus Gregory was also on the original university council. Gregory may well have had Sylvester in mind as a future applicant, for when the first students arrived in 1828 the 14-year-old James was among them. He was placed in the higher division of the senior mathematics class and, according to his professor Augustus de Morgan, writing some years later, Sylvester 'became by far the first pupil in it'. De Morgan also wrote that he had 'never before or since (seen) mathematical talent so strongly marked in a boy of that age'.

IN SPITE OF HIS precocious talent, Sylvester's behaviour was less mature. After an incident in which he allegedly took 'a table knife from the refectory with the intention of sticking it into a fellow student who had incurred his displeasure', his family decided to remove him from the university. A letter to the university authorities written in 1829 by James' brother Elias states: 'Owing to the extreme youth of my brother ... they deem it advisable that he should at the present withdraw from the London University and reside with his family in Lancashire'. Nevertheless the incident and James' departure led to the myth that he had been expelled.

He went to live in Liverpool with his elder sisters. Enrolled at the Royal Institution School, he was unhappy, taunted by his schoolfellows because he was cleverer than them and a Jew. He did receive a boost, however, when through his brother in New York he was sent a combinatorial problem in a competition posed by the American contractors of lotteries. He solved this and received a letter praising his mathematical ability, together with a prize of \$500, an enormous sum for a schoolboy.



Right: Robert Cruikshank's 1825 cartoon satirises Lord Brougham's attempts to raise funds for the foundation of London University College.

Below: Professor Augustus de Morgan, c.1840.



In 1831 Sylvester was admitted as an undergraduate to St John's College, Cambridge. He was absent from the university for the following two years, possibly due to illness. During this hiatus his father died and, in 1835, Sylvester published his first book, *Collection of Examples on the Integral Calculus*. He returned to Cambridge in January 1836. Further attempts by liberal academics and politicians to remove the disability for Jews and dissenters taking degrees had been unsuccessful. Unable to 'swear on the true faith of a Christian', when Sylvester eventually sat the tripos he knew that no matter how well he did he would not receive a degree. Students whose marks would normally entitle them to first class honours were ranked as wranglers. Sylvester was ranked second wrangler. Yet without a degree he was unable to obtain a fellowship or compete for one of the important mathematical

Unable to 'swear on the true faith of a Christian', when he sat the tripos Sylvester knew that no matter how well he did he would not receive a degree



A meeting of the Fellows of the Royal Society, c.1844, at Somerset House, its home until 1857.

prizes offered by the university. Around this time Sylvester engaged in a correspondence with Lord Brougham, to whom he had once sent a pamphlet criticising Euclid's definition of a straight line. Brougham, though a politician and a lawyer, had a deep interest in mathematics.

Though it was not his first choice of subject, when the chair in natural philosophy at London University College became vacant, Sylvester successfully applied. He was only 23 at this time. At Cambridge he had attended lectures in chemistry and had knowledge of physics but he had difficulty in drawing diagrams on the blackboard, which he now sought to correct by taking drawing lessons. He also wrote papers in the *Philosophical Magazine* on optical theory, the motion of fluids and rigid bodies and definite double integration, among other subjects, and revealed his talent for inventing words for mathematical concepts. By 1839 his reputation was such that he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

TRINITY COLLEGE Dublin did not require religious tests for graduates to receive degrees. An arrangement existed with St John's College Cambridge, whereby a graduate from Cambridge enjoyed the rights and privileges of the Dublin college and vice versa. It was via this *quid pro quo* that Sylvester was able to receive a BA from Dublin in 1841 and, since it was three years after

he had passed his Cambridge exams, he was also able to claim an MA.

Sylvester's much admired former teacher, de Morgan, was only eight years his senior and Sylvester realised that he had little chance of replacing him as professor of mathematics at London University College. With all other mathematical appointments in England closed to him and eager to teach his chosen subject he applied for the professorship of mathematics at the University of Virginia and was accepted for a probationary year. He was to be America's first Jewish professor.

In November 1841 he was welcomed to Charlottesville, Virginia. Although the local literary magazine reported that Sylvester's work was 'highly satisfactory', there were xenophobic undercurrents. *The Watchman of the South*, the organ of the Presbyterian Church, attacked the appointment of an English Jew. There was strong anti-English feeling because the country was seen in general as anti-slavery and slavery was an integral part of southern culture. One contemporary wrote: 'I reckon our London cockney knows as much about Virginian manners and character as a horse would about the differential calculus.'

The University of Virginia was not the peaceful place envisaged by its founder, Thomas Jefferson, when the campus had opened 16 years earlier. Only a year before Sylvester's arrival a professor of law with connections to Jefferson



The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in 1831.

had been killed by marauding students commemorating an earlier rebellion. Jefferson had planned that there should be few rules, claiming that if the students were treated like gentlemen they would behave so. Sadly this was not the case: quarrels fuelled by alcohol often ended in violence.

IT WAS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND that Sylvester attempted to discipline a student called Ballard, for not paying attention in class. When he was reprimanded, Ballard became abusive and Sylvester reported this to the faculty meeting. The student claimed that Sylvester did not treat him like a gentleman and that he had been spoken to 'as an overseer speaks to a negro slave'. In Southern society sensitivities to gentlemanly conduct and family honour ran high. It was understandable that Sylvester was concerned for his personal security and he, like other faculty members, carried a sword stick. There are conflicting views as to what happened next. One report was that Ballard and his brother approached Sylvester demanding an apology and threatening him, if one was not forthcoming. Sylvester refused and received a blow that knocked off his hat and another to his head; he drew his sword stick and launched at one brother who collapsed in fear, but no damage was done. Nevertheless Sylvester was hurried away by a colleague. Soon after he decided that it was time to leave Virginia and travel to New York. From there he looked for another academic appointment in America.

Sylvester made contact with a number of leading US academics, such as Harvard's professor of astronomy and

mathematics, Benjamin Pierce, and Princeton's professor of physics, Joseph Henry. Attempts were made to secure him a post at Harvard but with no luck. However, his contacts did broaden his social horizons in New York and he was introduced to a Miss Marsden, with whom he formed a romantic attachment. It did not lead to marriage, however, possibly due to the couple's religious differences. She never married subsequently and neither did he. Though he suffered further heartbreak, he continued to enjoy the company of women.

During this time in New York Sylvester discovered a love of writing poetry. Many of his mathematical papers contain examples of his poems and he included extracts in his major lectures. Sylvester also greatly enjoyed music. He played the piano and sang throughout his life. He once wrote:

*May not music be described as the mathematic of sense,
Mathematic as the music of the reason? The soul of each
the same! Thus the musician feels mathematic and the
mathematician thinks music.*

THE EARLY 1840S WERE a difficult time for Sylvester. He had heard that rumours were circulating that he was unable to keep order and had been forced to leave the University of Virginia. When he applied for a professorship at Columbia University he was told by the selection committee that the election of a Jew 'would be repugnant to every member of the board'. It was time to return to England.

With the rise in the number of insurance companies, the

role of an actuary began to be considered important. Principles using theories of probability and compound interest were employed to determine the price of annuities. Several mathematicians were consultants to insurance companies. Professor de Morgan was among them and it might well have been he who recommended Sylvester for a position. In 1844 Sylvester became the first actuary to be employed by the newly opened Equity and Law Life Assurance Society, where he would remain for the next 12 years. He was instrumental in founding the Institute of Actuaries in 1848, which professionalised the role, holding the position of vice president for five years.

Writing to the American mathematician Joseph Henry in the 1840s, he noted that he had 'recovered [his] footing on the world's slippery path', adding that his painful experiences in America were not without benefit 'from the thorn of suffering I plucked the flower of wisdom'. His days were filled with working for Equity and Law and the only time for mathematics was at night. He managed to write articles on number theory and combinatorics for the *Philosophical Magazine* and key papers that developed the theory of invariants for the *Cambridge and Dublin Mathematical Journal*. He had also taken in to his lodgings at 26 Lincoln's Inn a pupil, Benjamin Leigh Smith, who was preparing for Cambridge. Benjamin had an older sister, Barbara, with whom Sylvester formed an emotional tie. Some years later he wrote to her: 'I should regard myself most favoured by providence were it possible for me to believe that you could accept the offer of my attachment and earnest and lifelong devotion.' Barbara declined the proposal, though the two remained friends until the end of her life. She later married a Dr Bodichon and is known as Barbara Bodichon, an advocate of women's rights, an artist and one of the founders of Girton College, Cambridge. Unsubstantiated reports that Florence Nightingale, an accomplished statistician and the first female fellow of the Statistical Society, was a pupil of Sylvester may have come about because Barbara Bodichon and Florence Nightingale were first cousins.

BY 1845 ALL DIRECTORS of Equity and Law were required to be lawyers. Sylvester joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar; shortly after, he was appointed director. In 1847 he met Arthur Cayley, six years his junior, another lawyer in training, studying a short distance from Sylvester's office and lodging at Lincoln's Inn. Cayley had been senior wrangler in 1842 and, not being a Jew, he was able to take a fellowship at Trinity. Later he decided on a legal career. Sylvester thrived on discussion and soon the two were exchanging mathematical ideas.

Arthur Cayley's
carte-de-visite
from the early
1860s.



Barbara Leigh
Smith Bodichon,
photographed
c.1857.

During their life-long friendship, in which they often wrote to each other on a daily basis, they never actually co-wrote a mathematical paper. Yet together they revolutionised 19th-century British mathematics through their development of the theory of algebraic invariants among other topics. Sylvester later wrote about one of his creative evenings: '... in a back office in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The work was done and well done, but at the usual cost of racking thought – a brain on fire ... That night we slept no more'.

IN 1853 FURTHER ATTEMPTS were made by Lord Russell to end the civil and religious prohibitions on Jews, which had by now been removed for Protestant dissenters, as well as Catholics, but the parliamentary bill was unsuccessful.

By 1854 Sylvester began to crave a more mathematically stimulating working environment. The position of professor of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich became vacant. This was a political appointment through the War Office and did not require an oath 'on the true faith of a Christian'. Sylvester called upon Lord Brougham, for whom he had assembled some testimonials. Lord Brougham garnered further political support for him and Sylvester felt confident that he was the best mathematical applicant. However, the post was given to a lesser mathematician, who had a prior connection to the academy.

Disappointed, Sylvester applied for the post of professor of geometry at Gresham College. Gresham professors gave public lectures, so it was not a university as such, but in any case he was unsuccessful. Now aged 40, he must have felt deeply saddened and frustrated by his situation. However, the following year the new professor of mathematics at Woolwich died unexpectedly and Sylvester was appointed to replace him. The position came with a large house and garden, a salary of £500 a year and the requirement for only three days teaching a week. For the first months he also had to fill in for an absent professor of natural sciences. Sylvester was now able to return a favour to Brougham by arranging a mathematics tutor for his nephew, who wished to apply for a place at the academy.

When not at his home in Woolwich, Sylvester spent his days at the Athenaeum, which had the most comprehensive library of any club in London. He had been elected a member on April 15th, 1856 under Rule II, which provided for the 'annual introduction of a certain number of persons of distinguished eminence in science, literature or the arts, or public services'. This was a welcome recognition of his status. Named after Athene, goddess of wisdom, the club appropriately had no rules excluding dissenters.

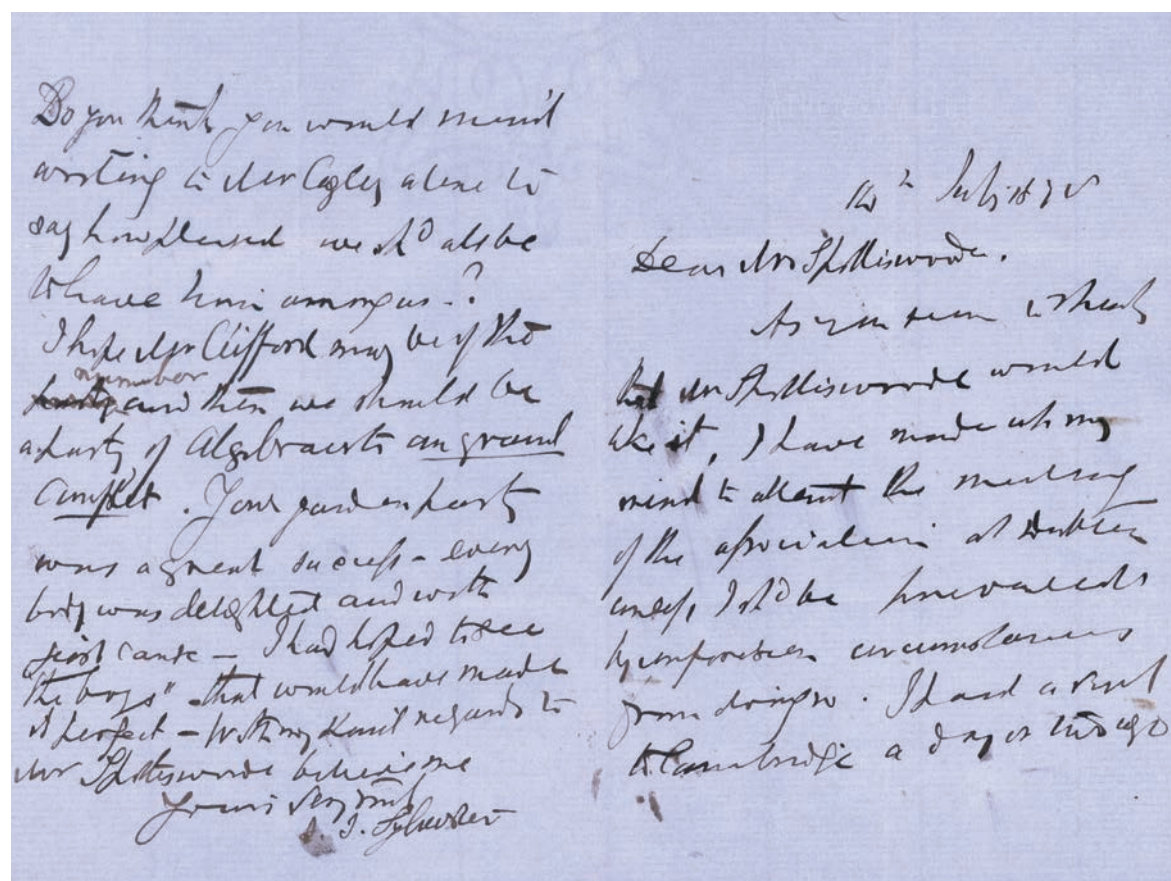
Sylvester spent 15 years at Woolwich and, though they were not without their problems, his mathematical research was fruitful. By degrees recognition came, including the award of the Royal Medal of the Royal Society, recognising his eminence within the scientific community. He succeeded his teacher, de Morgan, as the second president of the London Mathematical Society and became president of the mathematical and physical section of the British Association in 1869.

In 1870 he published a book on poetry, *The laws of verse or principles of versification exemplified in metrical translations*, in which he attempted to analyse verse in triads of sound, idea and words, as well as translating poems from the Greek. The same year new regulations at the Royal Military Academy forced Sylvester to retire six weeks short of the 15 years that would have entitled him to a full pension of two thirds of his final salary. The authorities were not prepared to allow him to stay for the extra six

Sylvester requested 'aid ... in bringing pressure to bear on the government. Justice counts for nothing with the present men ... they will only yield, if at all, to party considerations'

weeks and expected him to be content with a pension of half his previous salary. Sylvester was not the sort of man to accept this inequity. He now summoned support, including from his old pupil Benjamin Leigh Smith, requesting 'aid ... in bringing pressure to bear on the government. Justice counts for nothing with the present men ... they will only yield, if at all, to party considerations'. Sir Francis Goldsmid (son of the financier, Sir Isaac) threatened to 'move an address to the Crown that the professor might receive his pension, two thirds of the salary ... enjoyed by him at the time of his removal'. After a considerable struggle, Sylvester was granted his full pension, but he was now without an academic position. For a while he occupied himself as Examiner in Mathematics for the University of London and pursued his musical interests. (He had received singing lessons from the French composer, Charles-François Gounod, and had joined a choral club.) He was made a corresponding member of the St Petersburg Academy and a Foreign Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1874 he was invited to give one of the honoured Friday evening discourses at the Royal Institution. His subject was the mechanical conversion of circular to rectilinear motion.

In February 1876 Sylvester was appointed professor of mathematics at The Johns Hopkins University, a new American institution in Baltimore still in the planning stages, which opened later that year. Sylvester was now in his early sixties but was full of ideas for the new graduate school of mathematics. He founded the now prestigious *American Journal of Mathematics*, amassed a talented staff



The first and last pages of a letter addressed from the Athenaeum and sent by Sylvester to Eliza Spottiswoode in 1878, in which he refers to 'a nest of mathematical nightingales' gathering in Dublin.

and enrolled gifted students, including women. In doing so, he raised the standards of American mathematics. Though he travelled back across the Atlantic during the summer break, he found the Baltimore climate hard and he missed his European life and associates.

IN 1883 THE POST OF Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford became vacant. One of the two most prestigious professorships in England, the other, the Lucasian Professorship in Cambridge, was already occupied by Sylvester's friend and colleague, Arthur Cayley. By this time the Universities Tests Act (1871) had guaranteed religious freedom in universities in England. In 1872, St Johns' College Cambridge not only awarded Sylvester his long overdue BA and MA, but soon after awarded him a fellowship and Oxford gave him an honorary degree. It was now possible for Sylvester to hold the professorship and he submitted his application for the chair through his friend the mathematician, publisher, president of the Royal Society and member



Left: the obverse of the Royal Society's Sylvester Medal 'for the encouragement of mathematical research', first awarded in 1901.

Right: Sylvester photographed in his later years.

before he died in 1897, aged 82, he was still busy working on the Goldbach conjecture: that is to prove that every even number greater than two can be partitioned into two prime numbers. In this he made some progress, but to this day it is still unproven.

On February 26th, 1897 he suffered a stroke. He died two weeks later and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Ball's Pond Road, Dalston.

Most of those who knew him acknowledged that he was sometimes difficult, with a tendency to irritability and restlessness 'perhaps inseparable from the possession of a mind of such power and incessant activity'. It seems that this was the only defect in his character. As he wrote in *Laws of Verse*: 'The mathematician lives long and lives young; the wings of his soul do not early drop off, nor do its pores become clogged with ... earthly particles.'

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of the selection committee, Sir William Spottiswoode. Sylvester also resigned his position at Johns Hopkins, to take effect from January 1st, 1884, regardless of the outcome. He learned in December 1883 that he had been appointed to the Savilian Chair. He was euphoric. His worth had finally been acknowledged. He was 69 years old.

Oxford was then in transition, from a collection of ecclesiastical colleges to a modern university. Sylvester concentrated on bringing Oxford mathematics into the late 19th century and tried to model it on the creative centre he had established at Johns Hopkins. He soon realised that the real power of influencing studies was in the hands of the college tutors and, to his frustration, that he could not have the same influence that he had had at Johns Hopkins. Nevertheless he remained at work until, aged 80, failing sight forced him to relinquish his duties to a deputy professor.

As before, when he lived in London he spent much of his days in the comfort of his club, where he could meet friends and entertain. The majority of his voluminous London correspondence was sent from the Athenaeum. Two weeks

FURTHER READING

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Hugh M. Stewart, *A Founding Vice President of the Institute of Actuaries*, *James Joseph Sylvester (1814-97)* Trans 26th ICA, 2

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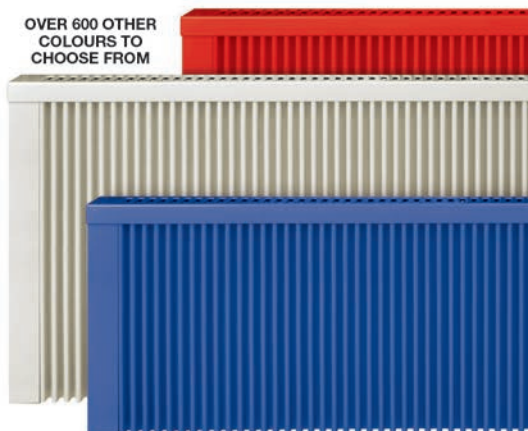
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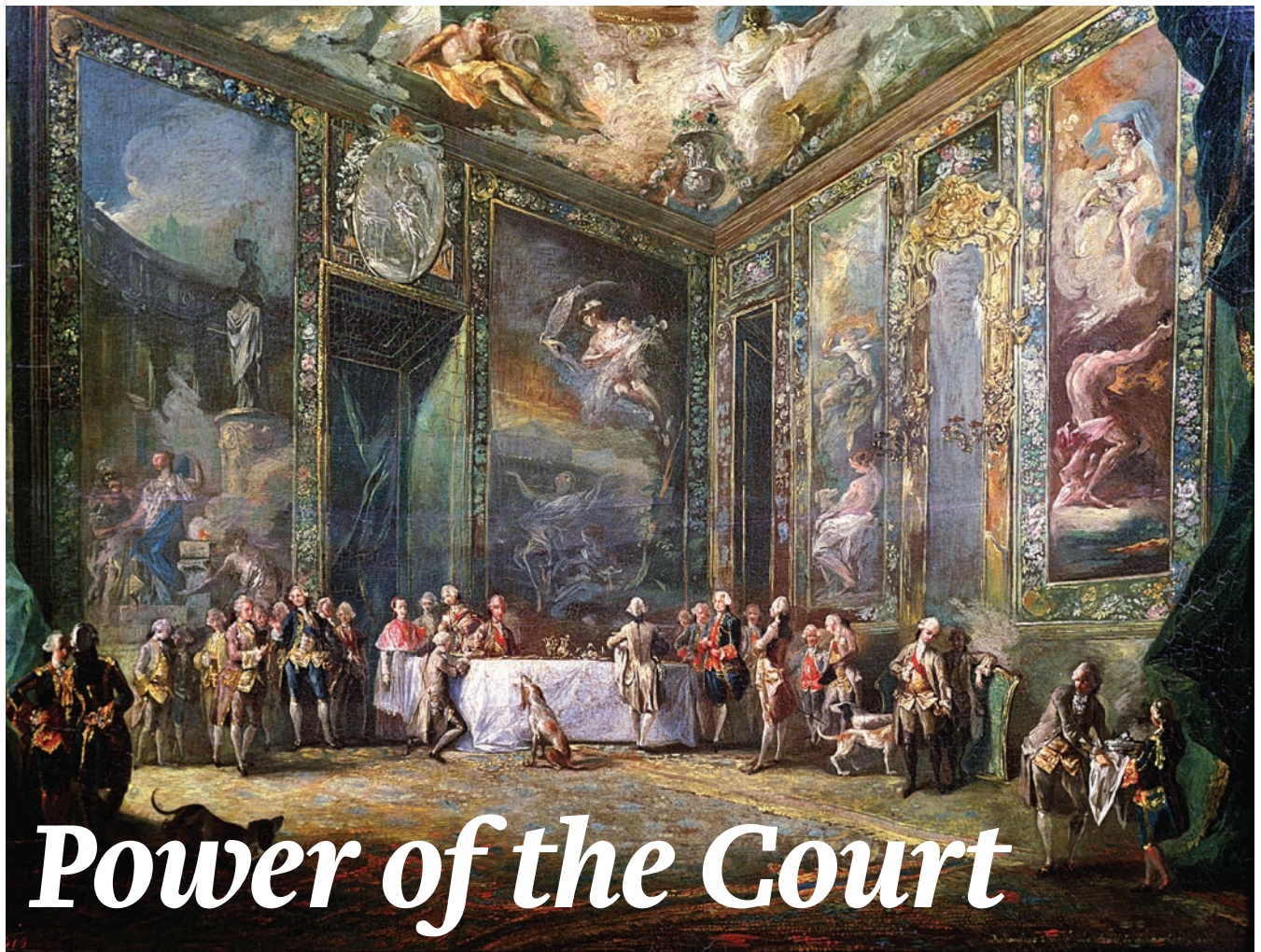
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Power of the Court

In recent years historians have shown a renewed interest in court history. Hardly surprising, says **Philip Mansel**, as courts play a central role in understanding the past and maintain a critical importance in contemporary politics.

COURTS ARE A KEY to understanding European history. Defined as ruling dynasties and their households, courts transformed countries, capitals, constitutions and cultures. Great Britain and Spain, for example, both now threatened with dissolution, were originally united by dynastic marriages; between, respectively, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469; and between Margaret Tudor and James IV King of Scots in 1503, leading to the accession a hundred years later of their great-grandson, James I, to the throne of England.

The House of Orange was crucial to the formation of the Netherlands, the House of Savoy to the unification of Italy, the House of Hohenzollern to that of Germany. Dynasties provided the leadership and military forces that enabled these states to expand. As Bismarck declared, while asserting the need for royal control over the Prussian army, blood and iron were more decisive than speeches and majority decisions.

United Germany had the most advanced economy and

universities in Europe. Yet it was also, as John Röhl has shown, a court society. The chancellor followed the kaiser to palaces or hunting lodges, however remote from Berlin, to suggest ideas or obtain decisions. Germany did not have ministers responsible to the legislature rather than the monarch until October 1918.

Like previous European conflicts, including the Napoleonic Wars and repeated wars 'of Succession', the First World War was in part a dynastic war; between the Karageorgevic rulers of Serbia, whose supporters had murdered the previous monarch from the rival Obrenovic dynasty, and the Habsburgs, determined to oppose Serb expansion, symbolised by another Serbian victim, the assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand; and between the Hohenzollerns and Romanovs for domination in Eastern Europe. The fall of four empires in 1917-22 – Romanov, Hohenzollern, Habsburg and Ottoman – was a European cataclysm comparable to the fall of the Roman Empire 1,500 years earlier.

Charles III of Spain
lunching before
his court, by Luis
Paret y Alcazar,
c. 1770.

The history of capitals, as well as countries, confirms the importance of courts. The rise of Berlin, Vienna, Madrid (often called Corte), St Petersburg and Istanbul cannot be understood except as court cities, apparent in the appearance of their streets and squares or, in Istanbul, mosques. A final, fatal expression of that role occurred in July 1914. Thousands, eager for war, gathered in front of palaces in London, Berlin, Munich (where, in a photograph, the young Hitler can be seen in the crowd) and St Petersburg, to wave hands, flags and hats, cheer and sing the national anthem as their monarch appeared on the palace balcony.

Expressions of majesty

Even Paris and London, which had a stronger tradition of urban independence from the crown, were court cities. The Louvre was a royal palace before it became an art gallery, founded by Francis I and principal residence of Louis XIV from 1652 to 1671. After the Revolution Paris again became a court city and remained one from 1804 to 1870. In the 18th century London's West End was called 'the court end'. On the monarch's levees and drawing-room days the lines of carriages being driven to St James's Palace stretched as far as Oxford Street. Parks and forests were developed around and within capitals to supply game for the hunts, which were both expressions of majesty and the principal recreation of courts, transforming the landscapes and animal stocks of the Ile-de-France, Richmond, Piedmont, Brabant and numerous other regions.

The development of constitutions also owed much to courts. The rise of the House of Commons was helped by disputed royal successions – no monarchy had more of them than England – as well as the needs of royal finances. The founding document of constitutional monarchy in 19th-century Europe was the *Charte constitutionnelle des français*, promulgated by Louis XVIII (who was one of its authors) on June 4th, 1814. The *Charte* became the principal model for other constitutions in Europe, including those of Bavaria (1818), Belgium (1831), Spain (1834), Prussia (1850), Piedmont (1848) and the Ottoman Empire (1876). Britain could not have a comparable influence, since it did not have a written constitution to copy.

A constitution was a royal life insurance policy: when Louis XVIII's brother Charles X violated it in July 1830 the dynasty was deposed. Nevertheless France finally became a republic, after 1870, only after three dynasties – the Bourbons, Orléans and Bonapartes – had been tried and found wanting.

Courts were vast economic machines, employing between 5-10,000 people in a number of palaces. They were zones of negotiation, information exchange and job centres for people from a range of classes, from duchesses to gardeners: Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was master gardener at Hampton Court; the Duchess of Marlborough's cousin, Lady Masham, had been a servant in a private household before becoming a favourite bedchamber woman of Queen Anne and confidante of her Tory ministers. Courts provided multiple economic benefits for many beyond the actual office holders, such as those companies that held royal warrants and workers in luxury trades.

The richest company in 19th-century Europe, the

Rothschilds, the 'world's bankers', 'started as Hoch-furstliche Hoffaktor (court agent) to the Landgraf of Hessen-Kassel. Having helped to finance the struggle against the French Empire, the Rothschilds became financiers to the Holy Alliance. They financed Louis XVIII's return to France in 1814, Charles X's departure in 1830, the Neapolitan Bourbons both before and after their exile in 1861 and the Austrian monarchy. As one Rothschild wrote to another, on February 8th, 1816: 'A court is always a court and it always leads to something.'

Britain remained a court society for longer than is generally recognised. Under Edward VII public ceremonial increased in splendour, the court entertained more frequently than before and there were more royal warrant-holders; 2,000 in all. Ernest Cassel financed Edward VII partly to obtain advance information (over, for example, the end of the Boer War) and meet people such as the Khedive Abbas Hilmi, a fellow guest at Windsor, useful for his vast investments in Egypt.

Lord Esher, half French and married to a Belgian, used his post at court and his daily meetings with the king to enhance the monarchy's ceremonial role, obtain access to War Office telegrams, reform the British army, help run the Committee of Imperial Defence and strengthen links with France. His influence over his monarch was greater and his love life more unorthodox (he received Eton boys in his room in Windsor Castle) than that of Rasputin.

The history of capitals confirms the importance of courts. The rise of Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, St Petersburg and Istanbul cannot be understood except as court cities

The courtly pleasures

Culture and creativity could be transformed by a court's desire for entertainment, novelty, information and glorification. Music, theatre, opera and ballet were inconceivable without court patronage: we can trace the origins of those last two artforms to the Renaissance courts of Florence and Mantua. Shakespeare, Racine, Molière, Voltaire and Goethe cannot be understood outside their court contexts. Part of political as well as literary history, they wrote about monarchs and courts and served in royal households.

Voltaire was a *Gentilhomme ordinaire* and historiographer of Louis XV and, briefly, chamberlain of Frederick II of Prussia. He wrote admiringly about monarchs, from Henri IV and Louis XIV to Charles XII. In the 19th century Walter Scott was an admirer of George IV, whose visit to Edinburgh he arranged; Chateaubriand was a brilliant royalist pamphleteer and memorialist; Stendhal and Mérimée were convinced Bonapartists. Having first served the Bourbons – in one poem he compared the birth of their heir, the Duc de Bordeaux, to that of Jesus Christ – Victor Hugo then became a courtier of the Orléans. Both dynasties rewarded him well. He switched to republicanism only after 1849.

Court history subverts categories. Rubens was also ►

a diplomat, Goethe a minister, Napoleon I and III keen huntsmen, Dostoyevsky tutor to Grand Dukes. Court history also subverts national boundaries. The Tudors came to power with French help: Henry VII, after 14 years of exile in Brittany and France, had French as well as English troops in his victorious army at Bosworth. One aspect of Anne Boleyn's appeal to Henry VIII was her French education and the skills she had acquired while serving at the French court. The House of Orange was both German and Dutch (and partly English), the Bourbons acquired Spanish, Neapolitan and Parmesan branches. The Habsburgs were able to switch nationalities and capitals between Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Brussels, Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon and, in the brief reign of Philip I, London.

Courts were among the few institutions common to different cultures in different continents. Through the prism of courts and monarchy, Cortes could communicate with Montezuma. The Sunni-Shi'a struggle now destroy-

Celebration of the Marriage of Louis XIV of France and Maria Theresa of Austria, June 9th, 1660, by Laumosnier.



ing Syria and Iraq is another war of succession. It began as a dynastic dispute, between the prophet Muhammad's Umayyad cousins and his son-in-law Ali over succession to the caliphate: from the start Islam was a state as well as a religion. In 680 the struggle culminated in the murder of Ali's son, the Imam Hussein, in Kerbela in Iraq. Every year, on the Day of Ashura, this murder is commemorated by Shi'a in mournful flagellatory processions.

Power base for women

Above all, courts subvert boundaries between the sexes. Because of a European consort's role in assuring the succession and enhancing dynastic prestige, her household and apartments could rival in size and splendour those of the monarch. Sometimes she controlled her own finances. The court of France was called 'a paradise of women'. A court was therefore the only arena where women could compete with men, on near equal terms, for power and influence. Hence the decisive impact on national and international politics of, to name only a few consorts, Anne Boleyn, Catherine the Great and Marie Antoinette. Or, among rulers' mothers: Catherine de' Medici and Anne of Austria in France; 17th-century Valide Sultans in the Ottoman Empire; and the Empress Dowager in China.

In a global, non-ideological, gender-conscious age, the appeal of court history is growing. The days when professors could claim 'only the condition of the working-class matters', or 'don't touch that royal stuff, it may damage

your career', are over. Historians of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains: chains of nationality and discipline, as well as class and politics.

Every year more groups, conferences and publications are devoted to court history, from the Centre de recherche du château de Versailles to the Rudolstädter Arbeitskreis zur Residenzkultur; from the Royal Studies Network to the Heirs to the Throne Project; from the International Courtly Literature Society to the Society for Court Studies. British TV history documentaries have focused recently on court history, some of it excellent, such as Helen Castor's *She-Wolves* and David Starkey's *Music and Monarchy*.

Outstanding recent publications in English include John Röhl's three-volume life of Wilhelm II (2001-14); two superbly illustrated volumes of articles, John Adamson's *The Princely Courts of Europe* (2000) and Clarissa Campbell Orr's *Queenship in Europe* (2004); Robert Bucholz's *The Augustan Court* (1993); Robert Knecht's *The French Renaissance Court* (2008); Antony Spawforth's *The Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* (2011); and Richard Wortman's *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in the Russian Monarchy* (2006). Jeroen Duindam's *Dynasty: a Global History* is eagerly awaited.

One reason for the growing appeal of court history is that it is about character as well as countries, capitals and cultures. Courts confirm that private and family ambition can drive public causes and the flexibility of beliefs and motives. Once he became Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, for example, despite his previous puritanism, began to dress fashionably and to maintain something approaching a traditional royal household in former royal palaces such as Hampton Court. The former Jacobin Napoleon Bonaparte established a hyper-elitist court and a voracious dynasty.

As the French and Russian revolutions demonstrate, inside many revolutionaries is a courtier, even a king or queen, fighting to get out. Modern governments have modern courtiers. The Fifth Republic provides France with what journalists frequently call a 'monarchical republic' or 'republican monarchy', even a 'court society', centred on the Elysée Palace. De Gaulle, like many other 20th century leaders (Hindenburg, Franco, Mannerheim, Horthy, Mustafa Kemal and, of course, Churchill), came from a royalist background. The Fifth Republic is the most successful and widely accepted regime in France since 1789. After all its revolutions, France has the weakest legislature in western Europe.

Listening to Lord Goodman's telephone calls when he was the trusted adviser of Prime Minister Harold Wilson was a lesson in how Britain was run. Thirty years later Rupert Murdoch also had access to 10 Downing Street. At his garden parties ministers queued for access to the sun king as contracts and reputations were fixed.

Courtiers are everywhere: in offices and committees, in universities, restaurants and the media. Courts are keys to understanding not only the world but also ourselves. Courts are us.

Philip Mansel was a founder of the Society for Court Studies and is editor of its journal, *The Court Historian*.



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A Peace for the Strong

In the first of two articles marking the bicentenary of the Congress of Vienna, **Stella Ghervas** examines the Great Powers' attempt to create a new European order following the defeat of Napoleon.

THIS YEAR MARKS both end points of the 'long 19th century', the period of relative peace that began arguably with the Congress of Vienna in September 1814 and lasted until the outbreak of the First World War in July 1914.

Emperor Napoleon was defeated in May 1814 and Cossacks marched along the Champs-Élysées into Paris. The victorious Great Powers (Russia, Great Britain, Austria and Prussia) invited the other states of Europe to send plenipotentiaries to Vienna for a peace conference. At the end of the summer, emperors, kings, princes, ministers and representatives converged on the Austrian capital, crowding

the walled city. The first priority of the Congress of Vienna was to deal with territorial issues: a new configuration of German states, the reorganisation of central Europe, the borders of central Italy and territorial transfers in Scandinavia. Though the allies came close to blows over the partition of Poland, by February 1815 they had averted a new war thanks to a series of adroit compromises. There had been other pressing matters to settle: the rights of German Jews, the abolition of the slave trade and navigation on European rivers, not to mention the restoration of the Bourbon royal family in France, Spain and Naples, the constitution of Switzerland, issues of diplomatic precedence and, last but not least, the foundation of a new German confederation to replace the defunct Holy Roman Empire.

In March 1815, in the midst of all these feverish negotiations, the unthinkable happened: Napoleon escaped from his place of exile on Elba and re-occupied the throne of France, starting the adventure known as the Hundred Days. The allies banded together once again and defeated him decisively at Waterloo on June 18th, 1815, nine days after having signed the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna. To prevent France from ever again becoming a threat to Europe, they briefly entertained the idea of dismembering it, just as they had Poland a few decades earlier. In the end, however, the French got away with a foreign military occupation and heavy war reparations. Napoleon was shipped to

St Helena, a forlorn British possession in the South Atlantic, where he stayed out of mischief until his death.

Settling the consequences of the war was difficult enough, but the Great Powers had a broader agenda: creating a new political system in Europe. The previous one had been established a century earlier, in 1713, at the Peace of Utrecht. Based on the principle of the balance of power, it required two opposing military alliances (initially led respectively by France and Austria). By contrast, the victors over Napoleon aimed for a 'System of Peace': there was to be only one political bloc of powers in Europe. This led to the creation of a cycle of regular multilateral conferences in various European cities, the so-called Congress System, which functioned at least from 1815 to 1822. It was the first attempt in history to build a peaceful Continental order based on the active co-operation of major states.

From Utrecht to Vienna

Why did the participants at Vienna want to reform the Utrecht system? Why had active cooperation become so necessary in 1814 and not before? The explanation is rather obvious: the previous equilibrium was broken. During the 18th century the military strengths had been evenly divided between the two major alliances, but Napoleon had tipped the scales. With a powerful army, he had managed to crush all his opponents except Britain and Russia, creating a continental empire. Defeating him had required a massive joint effort from the other powers. The turning point was the battle of Leipzig in October 1813, in which more than half a million soldiers took part.

Worse still, the Napoleonic wars had shattered borders and broken political institutions in several parts of the Continent, especially in Germany. In order to heal its wounds, Europe needed peace. Hence the first priority was to preserve it from two of its chronic problems: hegemonic adventures (so there would never again be a Napoleonic empire) and internecine wars (so there would be no reasons to fight each other).

Interestingly, the Congress System was the combination of distinct antidotes proposed by the Great Powers. The British Cabinet and its diplomats, led by Viscount Castlereagh, still believed in its earlier formula, 'the balance of power'. Traditionally, British strategy had been anti-hegemonic and forward-looking. At Vienna, just as at Utrecht a century before, Britain considered it essential to contain France against a possible military resurgence. Indeed, in 1815, Britain supported a similar scenario of buffer states around France as it had done in 1713, comprised, north to south, of the Dutch kingdom, Switzerland and Savoy. The British went a little further this time: they wanted a new European order that was sympathetic to their own interests, which were mostly about sea trade. If that could be obtained by parley, rather than by military competition, so much the better – and within those limits, Britain would be willing to maintain frequent diplomatic relations with the other European powers. Indeed, its envoys actively participated in the Congress System in the years to follow.

As for Austria, Prince Klemens von Metternich also relied on a form of 'balance of power', though his application was more down-to-earth. In 1813, when the victorious

Russian army marched into Germany and liberated Berlin, joining a coalition against France had become a life or death proposition for Austria. It thus joined in the battle of Leipzig and the following campaigns. After Napoleon was defeated Austria had a further thorny issue to solve: how to manage its powerful and burdensome Russian ally? It had no option other than to go along with Russia and to enter into a 'balance of negotiation', playing off the allies of the same bloc against each other.

Surprisingly, the Russian view on peace in Europe proved by far the most elaborate. Three months after the final act of the Congress, Tsar Alexander proposed a treaty to his partners, the Holy Alliance. This short and unusual document, with Christian overtones, was signed in Paris on September 1815 by the monarchs of Austria, Prussia and Russia. There is a polarised interpretation, especially in France, that the 'Holy Alliance' (in a broad sense) had only been a regression, both social and political. Castlereagh joked that it was a 'piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense', even though he recommended Britain to undersign it. Correctly interpreting this document is key to understanding the European order after 1815.

While there was undoubtedly a mystical air to the zeitgeist, we should not stop at the religious resonances of the treaty of the Holy Alliance, because it also contained some realpolitik. The three signatory monarchs (the tsar of Russia, the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia) were putting their respective Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic faiths on an equal footing. This was nothing short of a backstage revolution, since they relieved de facto the pope from his political role of arbiter of the Continent, which he had held since the Middle Ages. It is thus ironic that the 'religious' treaty of the Holy Alliance liberated European politics from ecclesiastical influence, making it a founding act of the secular era of 'international relations'.

There was, furthermore, a second twist to the idea of 'Christian' Europe. Since the sultan of the Ottoman Empire was a Muslim, the tsar could conveniently have it both ways: either he could consider the sultan as a legitimate monarch and be his friend; or else think of him as a non-Christian and become his enemy. As a matter of course, Russia still had territorial ambitions south, in the direction of Constantinople. In this ambiguity lies the prelude to the Eastern Question, the struggle between the Great Powers over the fate of the Ottoman Empire (the 'sick man of Europe'), as well as the control of the straits connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Much to his credit, Tsar Alexander did not profit from that ambiguity, but his brother and successor Nicholas soon started a new Russo-Turkish war (1828-29).

Astonishingly, the Holy Alliance was also imbued with an idea inspired by the Enlightenment: that of perpetual peace. A French abbot, Saint-Pierre, had published a book in 1713 (the same year as the Peace of Utrecht), where he criticised the balance of power as being merely an armed ►

The British wanted a new European order that was sympathetic to its own interests, which were mostly about sea trade



Napoleon, back from exile in Elba, controls the balance of the Great Powers in a French caricature of 1814.

truce. By contrast, he proposed that European states should co-exist, while retaining their freedom, within a federation, complete with a court and a common army. The Holy Alliance certainly came short of that purpose, since it was merely a declaration of intentions. It was nevertheless a multilateral compact, not for making peace in Europe, but for maintaining peace among sovereign European states. Eventually, most of them, with the exception of Britain and the Holy See, signed the Holy Alliance.

Appointed by Providence

Alexander had been a man of fairly liberal disposition, as far as Russia was concerned. He had appointed a Polish patriot, Adam Czartoryski, as his *chef de cabinet* from 1804 to 1806, had upheld the parliamentary system of Finland, granted a constitution to Poland in 1815 and later supported a constitutional monarchy in France. However, the Holy Alliance and the Congress System that followed degenerated into what is termed the 'Reaction', as the formerly threatened European aristocracies concentrated power and wealth back into their own hands.

The cause can again be found in the Holy Alliance, since it stated that the three contracting monarchs were appointed by Providence; in other words, that they had divine legitimacy. It thus reaffirmed the traditional top-down view of society, where power stemmed from God to the people and not from the people to their sovereign. In practice, the monarchs refused to answer the increasing demands for political representation by the cultured elites. This proved ill advised, since the latter started voicing critical opinions in the press and parliaments. Failing to be heard, protesters took to the streets, as in student riots in Germany in 1817. The first 'reaction' on the part of the Great Powers was to silence

parliaments and censor the press. Italy also ignited with popular uprisings and further troubles in Spain spilled over to Mexico and South America.

To make things worse, the monarchs soon started borrowing each other's armies to put down rebellions. Since the term 'peace' had also, at the time, a connotation of 'law and order', it was justifiable under the Holy Alliance. 'Peace' became synonymous with repression of popular discontent. In 1830 Czartoryski, who found himself on the wrong side of a Polish rebellion against Russia, lamented that even though perpetual peace had become the conception of the most powerful monarchs of the Continent (he referred in particular to Tsar Alexander), diplomacy had corrupted it and turned it into venom. The Congress System rapidly became a directorial system: a syndicate of monarchs who supported each other against internal political competitors, especially their parliaments.

Outward success, internal failure

How effective was this 'system of peace'? This is part of the age-old debate between 'pacifists' and 'securitarians', the former believing that peace leads to security, the latter considering that security should be the *sine qua non* for peace ('if you want peace, prepare for war').

The political doctrine applied by Tsar Alexander in the post-Napoleonic era was definitely pacifist. In that case, however, pacifism was not meekness. In 1815 the tsar had not only won the Great Patriotic War against Napoleon in Russia. His army, by far the most powerful in Europe, had marched into the heart of Europe to liberate both Prussia and Austria. Having little left to prove, he could afford to champion peace, including being seen to do so in the eyes of his own subjects. In this respect, he rather applied the principle that 'peace is for the strong and war is for the weak'. In terms of international relations, the doctrine of the Great Powers was a resounding success, but in terms of internal policy, it was an unmitigated failure.

The Congress System formally ended in 1823, when the Great Powers stopped meeting regularly. Yet the one-bloc system went on for three decades. It survived the wave of European-wide revolutions of 1848, when the monarchs of Austria, Prussia and Russia duly assisted each other to crush the insurgents. The entente between the great powers finally broke down only five years later. In 1853 Russia decided to go for the jugular of the Ottoman Empire and threatened Constantinople. Britain and France countered by sending an expeditionary force, starting the Crimean War. The root of the crisis could, again, be found in a flaw of the Congress System (and again in the Holy Alliance): the omission of the Ottoman Empire from the European peace. The Concert of Europe endured until 1914, but the dream of perpetual peace in Europe died at the siege of Sevastopol (1854-55), during the Crimean War.

Stella Gervas is a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Center for European Studies. She is currently completing a book entitled *Conquering Peace: From the Enlightenment to the European Union* for Harvard University Press.

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Sexual Congress

Glenda Sluga explains the influence of a remarkable group of women as Europe's elite gathered in Vienna in 1814.

HALF A CENTURY AGO the Austrian historian Hilde Spiel recognised the Vienna Congress as one of the few historical events in which 'a group of statesmen and politicians ... laboured so extensively and decisively under the influence of women'.

In a period when the relatively new term 'international' was established, the Congress of Vienna enabled new ways of thinking about the universal relevance of morality and politics enacted in a sphere that was imagined as truly international. Although we could not know it from reading mainstream accounts of the remaking of the European

order after Napoleon, these transformations occurred in an era in which exceptional women, empowered by money or title, exerted influence over diplomacy and political ideology.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE if we take this influence into historical account? When historians have asked this question in the past, they have answered it by concentrating on women as double agents, spies, prostitutes and mistresses. Yet, looking more closely at the part played by women at the Congress, we find that gender roles and relations were profoundly implicated in the celebrated innovations of the Congress, in ways that change our understanding of the event.

To begin with, and thanks to the vogue for keeping diaries, we have ample evidence of the anxieties generated by the presence at the Congress of 'independent' women and sexually susceptible men. For the Danish foreign minister, Count Niels Rosenkrantz, Tsar Alexander was too eager to discuss politics with the ladies, a personal flaw that undermined the seriousness of Congress affairs. Friedrich von Gentz, secretary to the Austrian foreign minister, Klemens von Metternich, despaired of his superior's propensity for the distractions of love and the charms of women such as the Courland sisters, Wilhelmina, Duchess of Sagan, and Dorothea, the niece by marriage of the French foreign minister, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand.

For their part, the ubiquitous Austrian police spies

Masked ball at the Redoutensaal, Vienna during the Congress, c.1815.



Far left: Princess Bagration by Jean-Baptiste Isabey, 1812.
Left: Wilhelmine, Duchess of Sagan, in a sculpture by Thorvaldsen, 1818.

were riveted by the possible influence exercised over Congress statesmen and sovereigns by the Duchess of Sagan and her neighbour, Princess Bagration (nicknamed 'the Naked Angel'). Both women were in their thirties, connected by birth or family to the Russian Empire and, respectively, divorced and widowed. Both, too, had had affairs with Metternich: Bagration was the mother of his illegitimate child Klementina, while Sagan remained the object of his persistent advances during the Congress.

According to police reports, it was because Metternich had discarded Bagration that she could not be trusted and because he was in thrall to a calculating Sagan that the interests of Austria were threatened. These reports identified Bagration's apartments as the headquarters of a Russian camp, used by the tsar for late evening company, or perhaps to have his venereal disease treated, or to extract vital political information, often until the early hours of the morning (arrivals and departures were tirelessly recorded). The same diligent spies noted that Talleyrand and the tsar were also regular visitors to Sagan's apartment. Both women were also believed to be on Russia's payroll, accepting its political missions in order to make ends meet or in order to avenge themselves on Metternich. Spies concluded that Metternich's lack of self-control and clouded judgment had given Sagan and Bagration occasion to turn the Russians towards the French or Prussians and encourage the tsar to persist with a liberal and pro-Prussian agenda.

Even though the spies were mostly wide of the mark, their speculations provide us with a different kind of evidence of the political significance of representations of



Dorothea Courland by Jacob Nicholas-Henri, c.1815.

the sexual power of women. These representations are particularly striking when viewed alongside the picture that early modern historians are gradually putting together of the involvement of noble and aristocratic women as brokers of patronage, political agents to foreign rulers, the hosts of underground political networks, operating informal news-related and networking activities, including, into the 19th century, salons.



A selection of visiting cards for people of high rank, including Countesses and a Baroness, distributed at the Congress of Vienna.

Staël networked through her correspondence, personal relationships, her salon and, less conventionally, through her publications

Anxieties about women's influence over men at the Congress reflected the continuing relevance of the informal political roles that some women were still liable to assume. For example, between 1812 and 1814 the exceptional intellectual (of bourgeois birth) Baronne Germaine de Staël, from bases in St Petersburg, Stockholm, London, Paris and Geneva, had played a critical role in provoking opposition to Napoleon, firming up allegiance to the coalition against him and articulating a liberal agenda that helped define the terms of treaty making. Staël networked through her correspondence, personal relationships, her salon and, less conventionally, through her publications. Indeed, if it were not for her personal circumstances, she might well have been in Vienna in 1814, continuing to voice her political opinions and under attack for her supposed sexual immorality and lack of femininity. Instead, Staël's Paris salon continued to operate throughout this period as a 'centre of opinion', albeit from a distance. Staël was the subject of considerable criticism in some corners at the Congress, precisely for her political audacity; as one diplomat put it, she was a 'monstrous' hybrid, speaking and writing 'like a man', even though she comported herself 'like a woman'.

It is difficult enough to see through the layers of gender stereotyping and anxiety that surrounded the prolific Staël's political role in international history. Reading Sagan and Bagration's activities at the Congress between the lines of more limited sources – namely, secret police reports – is even trickier, although in Sagan's case we also have some correspondence with Metternich and with the British diplomat Frederick Lamb (Byron's brother-in-law and the true object of Sagan's affections at the Congress).

SAGAN WAS NOT as overtly political as Staël; she was multilingual, a bibliophile and detested Napoleon. When in 1809 her territory was laid siege to by his forces in her absence, Sagan took Austria's side and lent support to a group of hussars in their fight against French occupation. When Napoleon then threatened in retaliation to confiscate her duchy, she conscripted and outfitted 500 men to defend the property. In the dizzying days of alliance-building in opposition to Napoleon, Sagan's Bohemian estate, Ratiborschitz, was co-opted as the site of informal discussions between the courting coalition partners. The 1813 meetings marked a new era in Sagan's life. All the latest news in negotiations passed through her central European outpost. Karl Nesselrode, the Russian diplomat, later recalled that the Ratiborschitz conference was one of the most stormy to which he had been witness. At issue were differences over armistice, whether to give ►

in to Napoleon or fight on and, ultimately, how best to rally Austria as an active partner of the coalition. Sagan's part was to encourage Metternich's turn from political appeasement to military antagonism.

Sagan's motives were far from the liberal agenda that provoked Staël's political campaign. Sagan wrote to Metternich: 'My God, how I hate and abhor all liberal ideas.' Throughout this period she proclaimed her sympathies with the principles of her upbringing and detested 'with all her soul' the democratic associations that fed the values of self-love, vanity, insolence, unsociability and 'the inability to achieve an eminent degree of civilisation'.

At Vienna, Sagan's political inclinations inevitably spoke to her personal concerns. Her salon was home to the tsar and to Talleyrand (both men were familiar and even familial acquaintances, on whom the Courlands relied financially). Her politics included sympathy for the resuscitation of Poland. And, contrary to the spies' claims, she drew a line at a Prussian-led German federation, because of the threat posed to her sovereignty and her prejudice against Prussia born of her ostracisation from its court.

The status of Sagan in the events leading up to and during the Congress of Vienna helps us to see both the continuities in the domain of diplomacy and the shifting status of gender in the play of international politics and power. Sagan's story draws our historical attention to the moment, in 1813, when she took her first taste of diplomacy in the struggle against Napoleon and Metternich advised her: 'The past, my friend, is not you! This past is the domain of history.'

It is hard not to read Metternich's comment as part of a process that limited women's involvement in this period. Metternich made much of the fact that Ratiborschitz had become the 'centre of European diplomacy at the moment when this poor Europe is the foyer of the world's troubles', but he also wrote to Sagan demanding that she forego being 'political'. He warned her that he would love her less 'if she were "political"', citing negative examples of Bagration's ongoing attempts to take a political role.

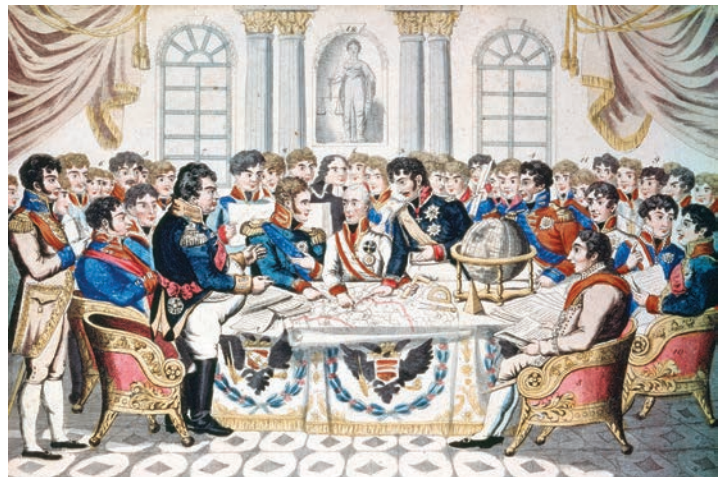
WHEN IT COMES to Bagration's political ambitions, the evidence is confusing. The Vienna spies claimed to have overheard her talking the tsar out of granting Poland independence and into giving the pro-Napoleonic Kingdom of Saxony to Prussia; she both hated the German federationist Baron vom Stein and aimed to drive Russia into Prussian hands. Either way she took on the appearance of a relentless femme fatale. For those who knew her well, Bagration had a reputation for hospitality towards the Russian diplomatic contingent in Vienna and for wielding influence over the 'young and old' who 'gathered around [her] skirts' and took up her anti-Napoleon views; although in 1814 the spies were not too sure what the diplomats who met in Bagration's rooms were plotting, because they conversed in Russian.

There is little novelty in the caveat of one of the more dedicated police informers: 'This is not the first time that



Top: Germaine de Staël by Vladimir Borovikovsky, 1812.

Bottom: Etching by Kutz showing statesmen dividing up Europe at the Congress, c. 1815.



the intrigues of women have influenced the politics of States. That's men for you!' His remark speaks volumes about the embedded portrayal of women and politics seen through a prism of their sexual power and threat (how else can we interpret Metternich's detailing of the sleepless nights when he fought off images of a pipe-smoking Sagan?).

Women did not always accept attacks on their independence. Staël denounced the evasion of liberal principles as the consequence of the weakness and incompetency of the men in charge and of their own intriguing. Sagan wrote to Lamb, not sparing the English in her wrath: 'How did the stupid fools who govern the world manage things?' Bagration criticised the sovereigns for 'having fun' and their ministers for squabbling.

However, we also know that by 1815 Staël felt increasingly vulnerable to attacks against her political activities ►

Anna, Madame
Eynard, by Firmin
Massot, c.1810.



because of their effects on the marriage prospects of her daughter, so she asked her political correspondents to burn her letters and repeatedly denied her interest in politics. After the Congress both Sagan and Bagration faded into relative obscurity. As with Staël, history was, indeed, not them.

THE INNOVATIONS OF CONGRESS were not only about the prohibition of women's involvement in an emerging world of international politics. Amid the noisy disapproval of women's political 'intriguing', older, more ambiguous diplomatic practices continued and new international opportunities encouraged appropriate forms of publicly performed femininity. This requires us to shift our attention from the gilt spaces of *le grand monde* to those of the bourgeoisie.

When Jean Gabriel Eynard, a highly successful self-made financier, accountant to the Queen of Etruria and secretary to the Genevan delegation, vacillated over whether he should take his much younger *ingénue* wife Anna to Vienna, he was concerned with the moral effect of proximity to the aristocratic world view. Anna went anyway and they set out from Geneva with minimal clothes, anticipating that, as outsiders, they would receive few social invitations. But the Congress drew them in, to its balls, dinners, salons and the many suppers that punctuated the rhythms of conference life. On any one day their socialising might take them to a *picque-nique de la noblesse*, attended by all the court, and then to a social event staged by fellow (albeit non-Christian) bankers, the Arnsteins. Although Fanny von Arnstein attracted the attention of the secret police – because her



Metternich, a portrait by Thomas Lawrence, 1815.

The Eynards' story leads us into Congress spaces where women's social agency was more comfortably accommodated ... including the suppers held by the wife of Lord Castlereagh

house regularly entertained the Prussian delegation and she talked up the rights of Jews – Anna Eynard's diary described the Arnstein residence as a place where an extraordinary mix of strangers, country people, ministers, princes and even papal emissaries gathered. Encouraged by the intimacy across class and religious lines, the Genevan delegation were soon asking Lullin to exploit the opportunities for promoting Geneva. Eynard, too, held modest receptions with her husband, inviting a mix of guests for tea and the occasional small-scale dinner. More often she found herself dancing with sovereigns and statesmen and talked up the interests of the Swiss republic.

The Eynards' story leads us into Congress spaces where women's social agency was more comfortably accommodated by men, including the Arnsteins' social events, with their staged tableaux, music and the suppers held by the wife of the British foreign secretary, Lord Castlereagh, where the hostess played no significant role and there was no moderated conversation. This was almost the antithesis of the aristocratic French salon at its revolutionary height, when the *salonnière* connected guests and directed discussion. In this sense the Eynards' experiences exemplify the changes in the French salon that historians have traced back to the Bourbon Restoration and diplomatic practice that

took place in England in the post-Congress period: that is, women were encouraged to take relational roles as wives, supporting their husbands socially. We can almost hear the ideological work of Metternich (whose own wife remained on the fringes of events) as he wrote to Sagan, warning: 'You cannot believe that I love you when you are political' or 'I do not like political women'. It is there, too, in the Eynards' accommodation of the intimacy that brought together Christian and Jew and in their decision, also made by the Castlereaghs, not to cross the thresholds of the morally *outré* Sagan and Bagration.

WHEN THE statesmen of the Congress reflected on their achievements, they saw radical innovation. Writing to Lord Liverpool, his prime minister, Castlereagh recommended the new system of international 'congress' for the 'solid good [that] grows out of these Reunions, which sound so terrible at a distance. It really [sic] appears to me to be a new discovery in the Science of European Government'.

For Metternich, the congress of Vienna exhibited a 'singular intimacy', 'without example in the annals of history',



Viscountess
Castlereagh by
Mrs Joseph Mee,
c.1813.

in which 'chief personages in the great drama found themselves together in the very same place'. 'The most difficult affairs ... were ... negotiated from one room to another; no sending of couriers, no written negotiations, no medium between the Courts.'

In their different ways, these men drew a picture of diplomacy and international politics comprised of the public sociability of men, uninterrupted by the 'dancing congress' and its implicit narrative of the distractions of sexual attraction. The articulation of anxieties in secret reports, such as representations of female intriguers and admonitions to women against their political independence, confirmed European men as the stakeholders of political, state-based life, in its national and international dimensions. They affirmed the growing importance of representing professional diplomacy as emotionally disinvested and institutionally procedural; its practitioners men of sense rather than sensibility – unless perhaps they were Russian: 'I will not say to you', Metternich chided Sagan, 'as the Emp. A does, that if you were my minister I would conquer the universe.'

Women were encouraged to engage with specific social

causes that separated out what Metternich described as the interests of humanity (fine for a woman) from those of empires (appropriate for men). 'I will allow you', he offered Sagan, 'to engage in the politics of bandages.' This was his answer to her request for a policy to deal with the dead and wounded littering the streets of Prague in the wake of the Battle of Leipzig in October 1813. Sagan's solution was to set up a hospital.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Congress, through to the 1850s, it was simpler for politically ambitious women to engage in the 'universalist liberal political humanitarian' efforts that historians have marked out as characteristic of the transformation of European politics taking place around the Vienna meeting: whether abolition, religious liberty, or national independence.

If we accept the historical summations of the Congress' innovations proffered by Paul W. Schroeder – namely, that radical changes took place in 'the field of ideas, collective mentalities, and outlooks' – then women and gender were critical to the marking out of a new epoch and its innovations. In the wake of the agreements reached in Vienna in 1815, gender bias meshed with a moralism that made the behaviour of women the measure of the differences between the dissipation and ambiguities of an old cosmopolitan world and the transparency and order of new 'scientific' regimens and bureaucratic norms. Staël reiterated this premise by explaining that, where there was arbitrary and repressive government, women were compelled for personal advantage to exert influence in the public sphere and behave in ways damaging to transparent and equitable practices.

For historians of gender in political history there are no surprises in the paradoxical conjunction of political modernity and gender conservatism. The paradox, of course, belongs to all of modernity, not just the early 19th century. It also belongs to the history of History itself. As the *Primat der Aussenpolitik*, or primacy of foreign policy, took hold of newly professionalising historical imaginations, a longer tradition of women and diplomacy would be only thinly remembered in popular lore, seen through the distorting spectacles of a sexually charged Congress.

Glenda Sluga is Professor of International History, ARC Laureate Fellow, at the University of Sydney. This and the previous article are based on papers given at 'The Power of Peace: New Perspectives on the Congress of Vienna', organised by the Center for European Studies at Harvard in April 2014.

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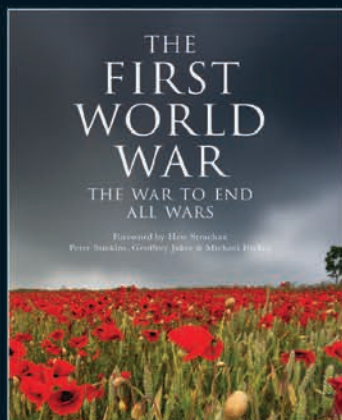
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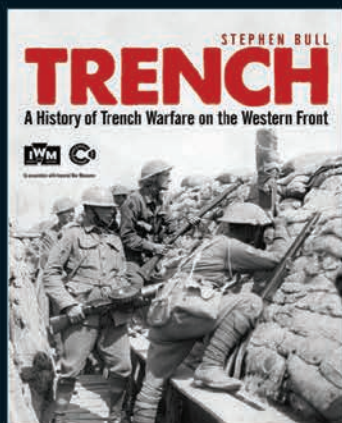
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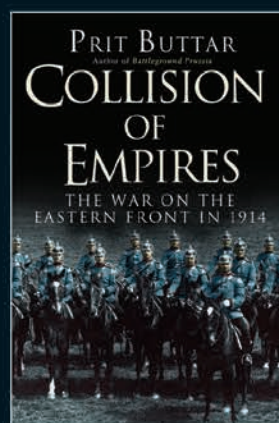
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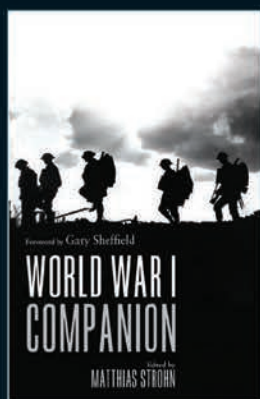
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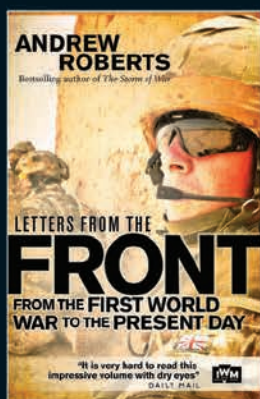
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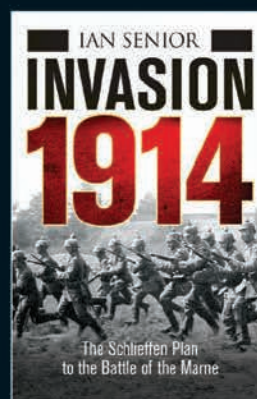
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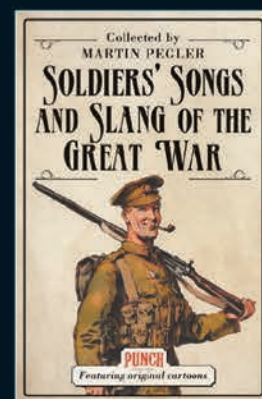
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Holy War is pronounced at the Fatih Mosque, Constantinople, November 14th, 1914.

Jihad 1914

In the early days of the First World War a plan was hatched in Berlin to spread revolt among the Muslim populations of the Entente empires. **David Motadel** looks at the reasons why it failed.

ON WEDNESDAY November 11th, 1914, as the Ottoman generals mobilised their troops to fight on the side of the Central Powers, Shaykh al-Islam Ürgüplü Hayri, the highest religious authority of the caliphate in Constantinople, issued five fatwas, calling Muslims across the world for jihad against the Entente and promising them the status of martyr if they fell in battle. Three days later, in the name of Sultan-Caliph Mehmed V, the 'Commander of the Faithful', the decree was read out to a large crowd outside Constantinople's Fatih Mosque. Afterwards, in an officially organised rally, masses with flags and banners moved through the streets of the Ottoman capital, calling for holy war. Across the Ottoman Empire, imams carried the message of jihad to believers in their Friday sermons. Addressing not only Ottoman subjects, but also the millions of Muslims living in the Entente empires, the proclamation was translated into Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Tatar and spread around the world. In London, Paris and St Petersburg, where officials had been haunted for decades by fears of Islamic insurgency in the Muslim-populated parts of their empires, the jihad proclamation sparked anxiety.

Selective enemies

The fatwas drew on an unusual concept of jihad. Its meaning has always been fluid, ranging from intellectual reflection to military struggle against infidels. Compared with earlier proclamations of armed jihad, the decree was theologically unorthodox, though not unprecedented, as it

called for a selective jihad against the British, French, Montenegrins, Serbs and Russians and not against the caliph's Christian allies, Germany and Austria-Hungary. The holy war was thus not a religious conflict in the classic sense, waged between 'believers' and 'infidels'. As only Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro had turned hostile to the caliphate, only they could be considered enemies of Islam.

Although the declaration was part of the Ottoman efforts to promote pan-Islamism, a strategy which the Sublime Porte had pursued since the 19th century to sustain unity within its heterogeneous empire and to win support abroad, a major role in this episode was played by officials in Berlin; it was the Germans who had pushed for the jihad proclamation. Strategists in the German capital had discussed the scheme for some time.

At the height of the July Crisis the kaiser declared that 'the whole Mohammedan world' had to be provoked into 'wild revolt' against the British, Russian and French empires. Shortly afterwards, his Chief of the General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke, had ordered his subordinates to 'awaken the fanaticism of Islam'. Various plans were worked out, the most detailed of which was written by Max von Oppenheim, an official in the foreign office and a leading expert on contemporary Islamic affairs. His 136-page *Memorandum on the Revolutionising of the Islamic*

At the height of the July Crisis the kaiser declared that 'the whole Mohammedan world' had to be provoked into 'wild revolt'

Territories of our Enemies, drawn up in October, a month before the Ottomans entered the war, outlined a campaign to incite religious violence in Muslim-populated areas in the Entente's colonies and imperial peripheries. Describing 'Islam' as 'one of our most important weapons', one that could be 'decisive for the success of the war', he made a number of concrete suggestions, including a 'call for holy war'. In the following months

Oppenheim established the Intelligence Office for the Orient, which became the centre of Germany's policies and propaganda in the lands of Islam.

Across the Muslim world German and Ottoman emissaries circulated pan-Islamic propaganda, drawing on the language of holy war and martyrdom. Berlin also organised ►

missions to incite rebellions in the Muslim hinterlands of the Entente empires. In the first months of the war a number of German expeditions were sent to the Arabian peninsula to win the support of the Bedouins and to disseminate propaganda among pilgrims. There were also attempts to spread propaganda against Anglo-Egyptian rule in Sudan and to organise insurrection in British Egypt. In Cyrenaica German emissaries tried to convince the leaders of the Islamic Sanusi order to attack Egypt. The Sanusi had organised resistance against imperial intrusion in the previous decade, calling for jihad against French troops in the southern Sahara and fighting the Italians following the invasion of Tripolitania in 1911. After lengthy negotiations and considerable payments, the Sanusi finally took up arms, attacking the western frontier of Egypt, but were soon stopped by the British. Attempts to arm and incite Muslim resistance movements in French North Africa and British and French West Africa had some success, but posed no serious overall threat. In early 1915 a German mission set out for southern Iraq to meet the influential Shi'a mujtahids of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, global centres of Shi'a Islam. Although the leading Shi'a scholars had already issued decrees in support of the Ottoman fatwas in late 1914, the Germans convinced some more mullahs, with significant bribes, to write up another proclamation of holy war. Some Shi'a dignitaries in Iran followed; scholars at the Iranian National Archives have recently edited a book of fatwas that were issued by the Persian 'ulama during the war, giving insights into the complex theological and political debates sparked by the sultan's call for jihad. Iran was considered to be of crucial strategic importance and German military agents operated there. The most important of all the German missions, however, was aimed at spreading revolt from Afghanistan into the Muslim borderlands of British India – the North-west Frontier – led by the Bavarian artillery officer Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer and his rival, the diplomat Werner Otto von Hentig. Although, after an odyssey through Arabia and Iran, Niedermayer and Hentig reached Afghanistan in 1915, they failed to convince local Muslim leaders to join the jihad.

A kaiser, not a caliph

Overall, German-Ottoman attempts to employ Islam for their war effort failed. In the capitals of the Entente the call for holy war caused much anxiety among officials, who maintained military reserves in their Muslim-populated colonies, troops which could have otherwise fought in the trenches of Europe. Yet Berlin and Constantinople did not succeed in inciting larger uprisings. The idea that Islam could be used to provoke an organised revolt was a misconception. The influence of pan-Islam was overestimated. The Muslim world was far too heterogeneous. More importantly, the campaign lacked credibility. It was too obvious that Muslims were being employed for the strategic purposes of the Central Powers, not for a truly religious cause. The sultan lacked religious legitimacy and was less universally accepted as caliph than strategists in Berlin had hoped.

Finally, the Entente powers confronted the jihad.

From the beginning the French circulated decrees of loyal Islamic dignitaries denying that the Ottoman sultan had the authority to issue a call for holy war and declaring support of the Triple Alliance a divine duty. Religious leaders were actively involved in recruiting Muslims of the French Empire to fight on the battlefields of Europe. The British responded to Constantinople's call for jihad with their own religious propaganda: Islamic dignitaries across the empire exhorted the faithful to support the Entente, condemning the jihad as an unscrupulous and self-seeking venture and accusing the sultan of apostasy. Tsarist officials, too, employed religious figures to denounce the German-Ottoman jihad. Shortly after the proclamation of the five fatwas, one of the highest Islamic authorities of the Romanov Empire, the Mufti of Orenburg, called the faithful to arms against their empire's enemies. In the end many Muslims proved loyal to the French, British and Russian governments. Hundreds of thousands fought in their colonial armies. With the Arab revolt, London, in contrast to the Central Powers, even succeeded in spreading rebellion in the volatile imperial hinterlands of its adversaries. When the Sharif of Mecca, Husayn ibn Ali, and his sons Faisal and Abdullah switched sides in 1916, overrunning garrisons and port cities, it became clear that the German-Ottoman jihad had failed. Sharifian propaganda justified the revolt against



Celebrating Turkey's entry into the war, Constantinople, October 1914.

Constantinople in religious terms, accusing the Ottomans of corrupting the purity of Islam and betraying the community of believers. The rulers on the Bosphorus were perceived by the rebels as 'godless transgressors of their creed and their human duty' and 'traitors to the spirit of the time, and to the highest interests of Islam', as T.E. Lawrence later put it in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Islamic propaganda, it became clear, could also be used against the Central Powers. Today, a hundred years after the Ottoman declaration of holy war, we look back at a century of attempts to exploit the concept of jihad, to politicise the sacred for profane political aims – a story that is far from over.

David Motadel is a research fellow at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge and editor of *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford University Press, 2014). His *Islam and Nazi Germany's War* will be published by Harvard University Press in November 2014.

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Jad Adams considers the actions of the militant British suffragette movement and its far-reaching impact on the global struggle for female suffrage in the 20th century.



We Will Fight for You!

THE WOMEN'S Social and Political Union (WSPU), which was given the mocking diminutive name 'suffragettes' by the *Daily Mail* in 1905, had been active for only 11 years when it ended its campaign of militancy in 1914. During this time it gave the world a new version of what it was to be a woman: strident, combative and willing to put up a physical fight to achieve political goals. This did not happen overnight. The WSPU was formed in 1903 but the first stone was not thrown until 1908 and there was a truce for most of 1910 and 1911. The militant action espoused by Emmeline Pankhurst and her supporters went on for about five years, the last two of these involving serious acts of destruction, including arson and the use of explosives. It encompassed unladylike and deliberately uncultured behaviour, such as spitting at policemen and slashing paintings in galleries. Such behaviour challenged the Victorian notion of the moral superiority of women, even as the suffragettes themselves promoted this

view of women as one clear reason why they should have the vote.

The impact of the suffragettes in altering public perceptions of femininity was probably greater internationally than it was in the UK. However, not all were impressed by the militant tactics; in a letter of 1909 the Dutch suffragist Rosa Manus described a recent rally at the Albert Hall:

Mrs Pethick Lawrence was in the chair and Mrs Pankhurst and Christabel Pankhurst spoke. On the platform were seated all the women and girls who had been in prison. They were dressed in white and wore the colours of the suffragettes, green, mauve and white. They held big banners and flags in their hands and every moment when one of these women said a word they approved of they all called out together – here here!! [sic] Or if they disapproved – shame – shame. It is a ridiculous way. They wanted to persuade everybody that the militant tactics are the best and that only the vote can be obtained through the militant ►

An Austrian ceramic of a suffragette trampling on a policeman, 1909.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

tactics. Everybody who at first thought they like the work of the suffragettes changed their opinion after that evening.

Negative reaction to the British militants was also apparent in Danish women's reluctance to engage in so much as lobbying or demonstrations, lest these suggest their association with suffragette methods. From 1908 a Women's Suffrage Day was held annually in Denmark on June 20th with speeches but there were no accompanying marches or lobbies. In Germany the most radical suffragists declared themselves on a path to independent militancy, although they, too, rejected violent action. This resulted in a farcical situation whereby even the suggestion of a march through the streets of Munich in 1912 was considered too extreme; the 'march' was eventually held with the participants seated in carriages, although clad in the militant suffragette colours of green, purple and white.

THE MOST IMPORTANT visitor to Britain to be influenced by the WSPU action was Mohandas Gandhi, who came to London to lobby the Colonial Office for the rights of South African Indians in the proposed Union of South Africa in 1909. He sent home a photograph of suffragettes with the approving message: 'Many of the ladies in this picture have been to jail', adding:

I attended a great suffragette meeting last night; met Mrs Pankhurst also. I am sending you their weekly Votes for Women. We have a great deal to learn from these ladies and their movement.

In almost every article he sent back to his newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, he mentioned the suffragettes' exploits, praising their willingness to go to prison. Gandhi was particularly effusive about women hunger-striking over a matter of principle: the right to be treated as political prisoners. He admired their concept of moral leadership and their certainty that they were right and called on Indian men in South Africa to be as brave as British women:

They do not allow themselves a moment's rest. To the hundreds of thousands of women who oppose them, they merely say: 'You do not know your interests. We shall fight for you. That you will not help makes no difference to us.'

After his visit to London, Gandhi wrote his most important work, *Hind Swaraj* ('Indian Home Rule'), on the boat returning to South Africa. The publicity value of sending women to jail had doubtless made an impression during this trip. Certainly it was after he sent women into the fray in the struggle for Indian civil rights in South Africa that the movement became unstoppable. In 1913 three women,



Votes for Women – The Years of Franchise

1893	▷	1915	▷	1918	▷	1919	▷	1920	▷	1930	▷	1944	▷	1945	▷
New Zealand		Denmark, Iceland		Austria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, UK		Belgium, Kenya, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Rhodesia		Albania, Czechoslovakia, US		South Africa (whites only)		France, Jamaica		Bulgaria, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Panama, Senegal	



Above: Suffragettes from Allied countries visit the French President Poincaré in Paris to ask for women's participation in the peace conference, 1919.
Left: Doris Shafik, with Egypt's General Naguib in 1952.

including Gandhi's wife Kasturba, were imprisoned for crossing into the Transvaal in defiance of immigration laws. As more women joined the protesters, bringing international anger to bear on the South African government, Indian men who had not yet done so were increasingly shamed into supporting the protest.

THE STONE-THROWING, window-breaking and hunger-striking of the suffragettes was reported all over the world. Soon after the 1911 revolution in China, the activist Tang Qunying set up the Chinese Suffragette Society. Its members invaded parliament and broke windows in pursuit of their aims. The organisation published magazines with translations of foreign articles and stories about western suffrage activities, feeding what seemed an insatiable appetite for news of the British women's hunger strikes, demonstrations and the firing of letter boxes. Several Chinese women's organisations added 'suffragette' to their names after reading of the WSPU's activities. Chinese women were the only foreign suffragist movement to follow Emmeline Pankhurst's line in adopting the destruction of property as a tactic for women's enfranchisement. Tang was said to have smashed up a newspaper office after it published libellous statements about her.

The Dutch suffragist Aletta Jacobs, who acted as an international advocate for women's votes, met Chinese activists on her travels in 1912. She, however, was disparaging:

The Chinese women's movement, such as it was, lacked any form of organisation or unity of purpose, and it had appropriated the militant methods of the English suffragettes. When I asked these women why they had chosen such a radical approach, I was surprised to hear that, instead of reporting on feminism throughout the world, the Chinese press had reported only on the campaign tactics of English suffragettes. No wonder that, when Chinese women began to demand their rights, their first action was to break all the windows of a parliament building.



Kasturba and Mahatma Gandhi on their return from South Africa in 1915.

The struggle for women to be heard was incomparably harder in Catholic countries than it was in Britain and suffragists in such places worked to distance themselves from the image of painting-slashers and window-breakers. In the Philippines the first organisation to set women's suffrage as a main goal, the Asociacion Feminista Ilonga, was founded by Pura Villanueva in 1906. She saw no contradiction between her role as a feminist activist and that of a beauty icon – she was Carnival Queen of Manila in 1908. Her public appearances may have focused on clothes and make-up but Villanueva was no stranger to feminist rhetoric.

In her memoir of the suffrage campaign she recalls the founding of a feminist magazine, *Filipina*, in 1909 and its objectives 'to revindicate the rights of women', a reference to Mary Wollstonecraft's work of 1792.

Philippine suffragists made a point of disassociating themselves from the British suffragettes: 'The character of our women forbids them to resort to the militant methods employed by British women', their literature declared. They promoted themselves as beautiful women, wives and mothers, deserving of the vote because of these qualities. The most important hurdle to overcome in the Philippines was not the reluctance of men to grant suffrage to women, but of Filipino women to be concerned about it.

TWO AMERICANS who were influenced by the militant tactics of the suffragettes were Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. Paul was an east coast Quaker reformer who went to England to further the settlement movement to improve social conditions for the poor. In London she became an active suffragette, was jailed and went on hunger strike. Lucy Burns also won her spurs for her suffrage activism as a colleague of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst; she was awarded a special medal from the WSPU for her bravery in the course of several arrests and prison hunger strikes. ▶

Chinese women were the only foreign suffragist movement to follow Emmeline Pankhurst's line and adopt the destruction of property as a tactic

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| ▷ 1946
Albania, Cameroon, Djibouti, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Liberia, Portugal, Romania, Trinidad and Tobago, Vietnam, Yugoslavia | ▷ 1947
Argentina, Malta, Mauritius, Singapore, Venezuela | ▷ 1948
Belgium, Israel, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Suriname | ▷ 1949
Chile, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Syria | ▷ 1953
Guyana, Lebanon, Mexico, Taiwan | ▷ 1956
Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Togo, Upper Volta | ▷ 1971
Bangladesh, Switzerland |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|

VOTES FOR WOMEN

On her return to the US, Alice Paul founded the National Woman's Party in 1916. Her strategy was to attack the party in power, the Democrats, for not enfranchising women, just as the suffragettes had attacked the Liberals in Britain, as the ruling party who were therefore in a position to grant female suffrage. President Woodrow Wilson's view, unsurprising for a southern Democrat, was that women's suffrage was a state issue and he would take no federal action.

The National Woman's Party sent campaigners to the western states, where women were already enfranchised, to urge them to vote against Democrat candidates. The idea was to punish the party and show women's political power. It meant persuading people to vote against candidates on the basis of their party affiliation, even if they personally favoured women's suffrage, thus introducing to the US perhaps the most absurd aspect of the Pankhurst campaign.

The strategy was monumentally unsuccessful: Wilson was re-elected, carrying 10 out of the 11 states in which women voted. Paradoxically, though, it helped the cause, which had been opposed by party bosses, who feared what women would do with the vote. The election of 1916 indicated that they would not simply vote along gender lines at the urging of self-appointed representatives but would make their electoral decisions on a political basis, just as men did. Not apparently the radical threat imagined, women could safely be enfranchised.

The National Woman's Party began picketing the White House in January 1917. Its followers made no particular waves and were treated with respect (President Wilson raised his hat to them), but when the US entered the war in April 1917 their actions seemed unpatriotic. They protested that America was fighting to make the world safe for democracy abroad while women did not have democracy at home. When they unfurled a banner attacking 'Kaiser Wilson' in August 1917 they were assaulted by a hostile crowd and arrested. After this they courted arrest as the British suffragettes had done and went on hunger strikes in prison; Alice Paul was put in a ward for the insane.

Anna Howard Shaw, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, formed in 1890, felt that the Pankhurst-inspired women were 'hurting us fearfully':

I think by their unwisdom they have put us back ten years in Congress. It is pretty hard to work for years and years to bring the cause up to a point where it has some chance of going through and then have a lot of young things who never did anything to build up the cause, attempt to run things their way without being responsible to anyone.

Progress on the women's vote continued in the US, however, with state by state enfranchisements and, finally, federal endorsement in the 19th amendment, giving all women across the country the vote in 1920.

THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTES' TACTIC of hunger strike crossed several continents. Mexican women used it with some success in the 1930s. Spain's descent into fascism had a knock-on effect in Mexico, where fascists fought with liberals and left-wingers on the streets. Women did not gain from the conflict because men on the Left feared that, if given the vote, women might support the Right. One member of the Central Political Institute observed: 'The conquest of the vote – for which, with a tenacity worthy of a better cause,

Right: Eva Péron addressing a women's meeting during a Peronista congress in 1948.
Below: Pura Villanueva as the Queen of the Orient at the 1908 Manila Carnival.





Lucy Burns (far left) with Emmeline Pankhurst, when she visited Washington DC in 1913.

Below: the Women's International Congress in Tokyo in the 1930s, with its president, the German foreign minister.



certain feminist groups have fought – is certainly undeniably important'. However, before women could be given full suffrage rights they must develop a 'revolutionary conscience'. The president, Lázaro Cárdenas, emphasised that as 'the Mexican woman is much more superstitious and fanatical than the man' it would be best not to enfranchise her but to allow her to become politically aware first through trade union activity. In 1938, angered by these views, women of the United Front for Women's Rights held a dramatic hunger strike outside the president's home in Mexico City. After two weeks President Cárdenas committed himself to bringing the issue of women's suffrage to congress at the next full session. The resulting proposal was to give all Mexicans equally the vote at 18 if married or 21 if not, providing they had an 'honest' livelihood (thereby excluding prostitutes, as Latin American suffrage proposals

often did). The motion was agreed, albeit with little enthusiasm, but it was not finally ratified until 1953.

In Egypt the previous year Gamal Abdel Nasser's revolution gave the hope of radical change. As commonly occurred during periods of upheaval, women's suffrage was brought to the fore. However, one of Nasser's first actions was to ban political parties, including the feminist Doria Shafik's Daughters of the Nile Union. The Egyptian Revolutionary Command Council set up a committee to advise on a new constitution, but no women were included on it. When Shafik learned this, she and eight other women staged a hunger strike on the steps of the Egyptian Press Syndicate to ensure maximum publicity. The hunger strike was ended when the president promised to consider the women's rights petition. Egyptian women achieved the vote and the right to run for office in 1956.

LATER IN THE CENTURY Eva Perón in Argentina showed disgust at the 'English suffragettes' who 'seemed to be dominated by indignation at not having been born men, more than by the pride of being women'. Eva had little in common with earnest women for whom moral purity was as important as suffrage. She was not a feminist: 'Everything I knew about feminism seemed to me ridiculous. For, not led by women but by those who aspired to be men, it ceased to be womanly and was nothing!' Her husband Juan Perón became president in February 1946 and gave his wife the job of representing women's rights. Perón, with Eva's very public support, presented a bill to parliament to enfranchise all women. Eva organised suffrage rallies and spoke on the radio in support of the bill. She offered a vision not of assertive women taking over after gaining the vote, but of a woman who was feminine and attractive, a complement to masculinity. This was acceptable to men and woman in traditional Argentina and the bill was passed in 1947.

In general, women in other countries viewed the suffragettes who were prepared to put their bodies into the fight with awe and respect. Of the many thousands of suffrage campaigners throughout the world, the suffragettes are the ones of whom everyone has heard. They created a template for continued militant action, setting a historical precedent for 21st-century protest groups such as Femen and Pussy Riot. As the historian Ray Strachey has written: 'At the distance of thousands of miles the drawbacks were of no effect, and the courage stood out undimmed by undignified incidents or political unwisdom.'

Jad Adams' *Women and the Vote: A World History* is published by Oxford University Press this month.

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Louise Edwards and Mina Roces, *Asia: Gender, Nationalism and Democracy* (Routledge, 2004).

Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (Vintage, 2008).

From the Archive

More on the Suffragettes
www.historytoday.com/suffragettes

Peasants & Pellagra in 19th-century Italy

David Gentilcore describes responses to a hideous epidemic that affected the rural poor of northern Italy, from the mid-18th century until the First World War, the cause of which is attributed to a diet dependent on maize.

IN MARCH 1814 a London-based periodical called the *Pamphleteer* published the 'Narrative of the Crucifixion of Mattio Lovat, Executed by his Own Hands at Venice'. It took the form of a startling medical case-history of religious mania, as written by a Venetian surgeon, Cesar Ruggieri. The protagonist, Lovat, was a pious young shoemaker from a small village in the Dolomite mountains around Belluno. Lovat's ambition to become a priest had been thwarted because of his family's wretched condition. He became ill 'subject in the spring to giddiness in his head, and eruptions of a leprous appearance showed themselves on his face and hands'. The first sign of insanity appeared in July 1802, when Lovat, perhaps feeling the 'stirrings of the flesh against the spirit', 'performed upon himself the most complete general amputation' – a castration – throwing 'the parts of which he had deprived himself from his window into the street'.

Lovat survived the operation and subsequently migrated to Venice. Here he was able to practise his trade, but he became obsessed with the idea of crucifying himself. He realised his grisly objective in July 1805. The article describes at length the procedure by which he nailed one of his hands and both his feet to the cross, before launching himself out of a window, where he hung in agony, until he was let down by several passers by. One of these was Ruggieri, who treated Lovat's ►





Maize polenta became more than a staple, it became the only food consumed during winter and spring by large sectors of the rural poor. Pellagra was the result



Previous page: Peasants toiling over a maize crop in *September Sun* by Giovanni Muzzioli, c.1886.

This page: *Polenta* by Pietro Longhi, 18th century.

Engraving of the self-crucifixion of Mattio Lovat, dating from 1814.

wounds and had him taken to hospital. When Ruggieri asked why he had done it, Lovat replied: 'The pride of man must be mortified, it must expire on the cross.' To ensure that no one else was incriminated for his actions, Lovat 'committed his ideas to a slip of paper'. He felt no pain as he recovered, his state of religious insanity blocking the 'fluid' in his nerves. In August 1805 Lovat was transferred to 'the lunatic asylum of San Servolo', where he 'became taciturn, and refused every species of meat and drink'. Six months later 'there appeared some symptoms of consumption', including faint pulse, weakness and cough. Lovat would 'remain immovable' for long periods and in February 1806 the skin of his face and lower extremities peeled off. On April 8th he died.

RUGGIERI'S NARRATIVE is one of the first detailed case histories of mental illness. Presented as an example of 'religious mania', it appeared in Italian in 1806 and was republished in 1814, prompting translations into French, German and English. Ruggieri also used his pamphlet to identify a singular underlying feature of Lovat's insanity: a relatively new and still little-understood disease, known in Italy as 'pellagra'. The condition would not become known in England until three years later, when the doctor Henry Holland published 'On the pellagra, a disease prevailing in Lombardy' in the *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*.

If pellagra was unknown in early 19th-century England, it had been a fact of life in north-eastern Italy since at least the mid-18th century. A variety of peasant names for the disease suggest it was already widely known among the Italian rural population before physicians 'discovered' it in the 1760s. The first medical studies soon adopted the popular label for the disease, *pelle agra*, meaning 'rough skin', after its primary symptom. Pellagra was eventually identified as the disease of the three 'D's' – dermatitis, diarrhoea and dementia – to which we might add a fourth, death, indicating the different stages of the illness. Contemporaries were also struck by how the pellagra epidemic coincided with the spread of maize cultivation and consumption. However, the link between maize and pellagra, its nature as a deficiency disease (in this case a lack of the essential amino acid, niacin) and an effective treatment all eluded the medical profession until the 1930s. By the late 19th century the number of sufferers had reached epidemic proportions. In Lombardy in 1830 around 1.4 per cent of the inhabitants in maize-growing areas had pellagra. By 1881 there were an estimated 150,000 victims in Lombardy and the Veneto and the epidemic was spreading further south, into Tuscany and the Marche, even down to the gates of Rome.

WHAT MUST HAVE SEEMED like a positive agricultural development – the introduction of maize from Central America, with its prodigious yields – had some very negative long-term implications in Italy. What the environmental historian Alfred Crosby first called the 'Columbian exchange' inadvertently set in train the biological unification of the planet, bringing together two agricultural systems that had evolved separately hitherto. The result was an exchange of the fruits of the earth that continues to this day. Europe acquired maize, tomatoes, potatoes and most types of beans; the Americas were introduced to wheat, rice,

bananas, citrus fruits, coffee and cane sugar; Asia got bananas, papayas, potatoes and chillies; while Africa acquired maize, manioc and potatoes.

Because maize is such a prodigious food source, it has been called a 'coloniser', in particular in Europe and Africa. It has been blamed for nourishing the slave trade and causing a transformation in Africa's ecology. Its introduction into many parts of northern Italy was no less dramatic: a 'revolutionary irruption', in the words of the Italian historian Giovanni Levi. Maize was the first New World plant to be represented in Italian art and the first to be widely cultivated. Its agricultural success was due to several reasons. The first was yield. Estate accounts suggest that in the maize heartland, the Veneto, during the 18th century, the ratio of maize to wheat yield was in the range of 6:1. The second reason was its growing cycle: both wheat and maize could be produced in the same year, so that if the wheat harvest failed, a maize crop might still be planted. From famine food, it became everyday food. In the Veneto they called maize *formetón*, the word previously used for buckwheat. The staple food, *polenta*, went from being grey (buckwheat) to yellow (maize), as the plant became naturalised in the region.

BY THE 1870s maize was the primary crop in six provinces of the newly united Italy. In the northern regions of Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia and Romagna the product of maize fields represented 41 per cent of total production, against 33 per cent for wheat and 25 per cent for rice. The increased cultivation brought with it a structural shift in the Italian countryside, every bit as significant as the agricultural revolution in 18th-century England. Maize became part of the cash economy. Landowners speculated on what to grow and what to sell. Peasants ended up working for a wage, ►



Pellagra in hand and foot, from *Saggio di ricerche sulla pellagra* by Vincenzo Chiarugi, 1814.

rather than for a part of the production, or they had to pay in cash to rent their land. In either case, the relationship between landlord and tenant changed. What the peasant was able to produce for himself was often owed to the landlord. As a tenant got further into debt, he became further dependent on maize production. Peasants became trapped in an economic system from which the only means of escape was emigration. Thus began one of the largest voluntary movements of people in world history. Almost two million people left the Veneto in the last quarter of the 19th century, one third of Italy's emigrants.

Maize polenta became more than a staple; it became the only food consumed during winter and spring by large sectors of the rural poor. Pellagra was the result. The initial concern of medical investigators was to identify and classify the disease. In the Veneto the chief physician of Belluno during the 1760s, Jacopo Odoardi, was one of the first to explore the relationship between the cutaneous symptoms of pellagra: the apparent sunburn, the peeling, the scabs (like leprosy) and the mouth sores (like scurvy). Odoardi also described the series of symptoms that followed in successive years, from languor to madness. All of this made pellagra difficult to diagnose and it was often confused with a range of other diseases. He related what happened on the surface of the body to what was going on inside, explaining pellagra in terms of diet and a resulting sluggishness of the blood, analogous to scurvy. In fact, his preferred label for the new disease was 'Italic scurvy'. Odoardi's detailed clinical description, published in 1776, became the standard reference for successive studies.

The suggestion that there was a clear correlation between maize consumption and pellagra, perhaps even a causal link, attracted the attention of other physicians. Francesco Fanzago, doctor at Padua's main hospital, and Giambattista Marzari, professor of physic at Treviso's Real Liceo, both hailed from cities in the Veneto and had studied medicine at the University of Padua. Both men had been investigating pellagra for several decades by the time their major studies appeared in the

early 19th century. They arrived at similar conclusions: that pellagra in Italy was less than 50 years old, that it started as seasonal, that it progressed in stages, that it was not hereditary, contagious or transmissible by touch, that there were more women pellagra sufferers than men and that, given its cause, further investigations would turn up concentrations in other parts of Italy and Europe. Each took the credit for pinpointing the cause, which lay in the diet of the affected peasants. For Marzari, maize was the clear villain, a 'debilitating and unhealthy foodstuff', while Fanzago was less categorical. Fanzago and Marzari were also of like mind when it came to prevention. If a maize-based diet was the cause, in particular during winter months when little else was readily available, then prevention was simple: better food. Marzari warned that trying to eliminate pellagra without a change in diet was a chimera.

IN 1817 HENRY HOLLAND summarised the core issue for an English medical readership. The 'squalid wretchedness and emaciation of the peasantry' precluded any changes in diet or medical treatment in the home. Treatments were limited to responding to pellagra's symptoms, such as skin rashes and diarrhoea, not the underlying causes. The disease required 'those more general preventive means, which it is out of the power of medicine to afford', Holland concluded.

This basic fact, that the only real solution was an improvement in peasant conditions, would limit state response to palliative measures for the next century. When Holland visited the lunatic asylum in Milan, of the 500 patients of both sexes confined there more than a third were pellagra victims. 'The Pellagrosi afford a melancholy spectacle of physical and moral suffering, such as I have rarely had occasion to witness elsewhere', he wrote. And these were the lucky ones: because the hospitals were incapable of dealing with 'the vast numbers' of sufferers, most 'perish in their own habitations, or linger there a wretched spectacle of fatuity and decay'.

The lack of government intervention over the following decades meant that cases continued to rise, with an accompanying explosion

The image shows a historical medical record form. At the top, it is titled 'FRENOCOMIO' and 'TABELLA NOSOLOGICA'. There is a small portrait of a man in the center. The form is divided into several sections with handwritten text, including dates like '1880' and '1881'. The text is in Italian and appears to be a detailed medical history or diagnosis.

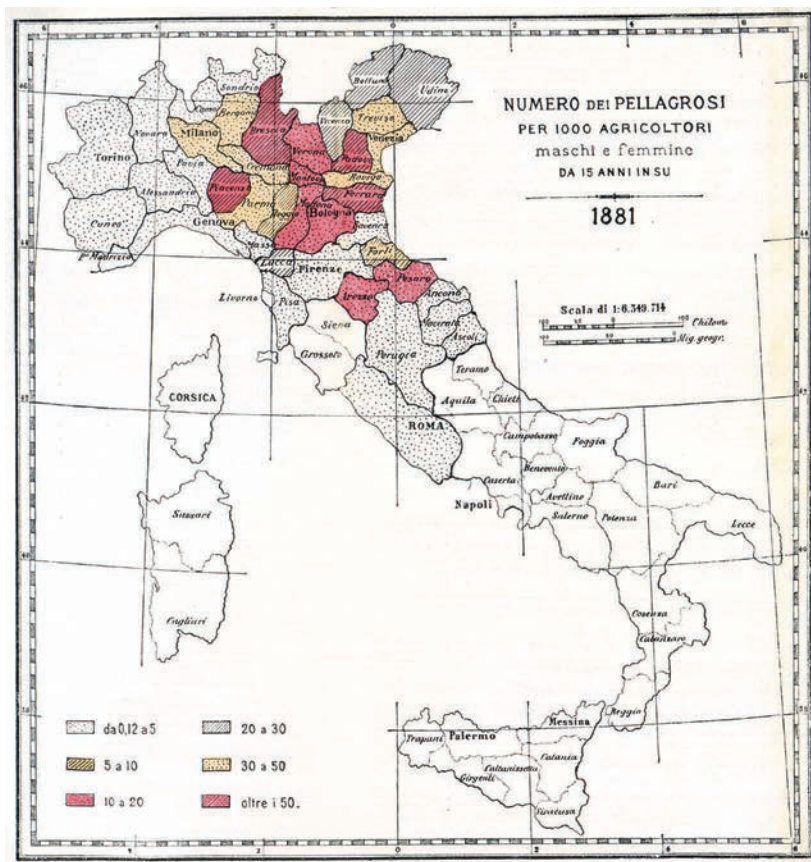
A medical record from the asylum at San Servolo, Venice, dated 1880 for a 14-year-old male pellagra victim, A.F.



Treviso Countryside, 1868-9 by Guglielmo Ciardi.

Around half of the patients admitted with symptoms of pellagrous insanity died in hospital, usually as a result of diarrhoea and the resultant wasting caused by the disease

admission the boy had been melancholic, exhibiting moments of frenzy, screaming and 'weeping without cause'. He had threatened to strangle his younger brothers 'and drown himself in the ditch that runs past their house'. His treatment at San Servolo began with a standard mixture of medical remedies (arsenic and phosphate of iron) accompanied by a 'substantial nutritive diet', but their impact was 'without effect due to the indocility of the patient'. In June he was still showing signs of madness, accompanied by fits every three or four days, which he could then not remember. By August these had stopped and his patient record refers to him as 'good, calm, active'. A.F. was released, pronounced cured, on September 13th, 1880.



in the number of victims committed to asylums. Known as 'pellagrous mania', the madness that occurred during the disease's latter stages was often violent. Provincial asylums were the only concrete form of treatment offered to pellagrins. Although their function was primarily custodial, the marginally better diet they provided was often enough to affect an improvement. Estimates for the asylum of San Servolo suggest that pellagrins accounted for between one third and one half of all mental patients admitted during the last three decades of the 19th century. San Servolo, where Mattio Lovat spent his final days, was located on the small island of the same name in the Venetian lagoon. By the 1880s its efforts were assisted by a sister asylum, for women, San Clemente, on a neighbouring island.

Typical of those admitted to San Servolo was a boy of 14, A.F. from Bergantina, the son of poor peasants, who arrived on May 18th, 1880 suffering from 'pellagrous mania with suicidal tendencies'. His file describes him thus: 'Little intellectual development, no education, labour way beyond his physical strength.' The 'immediate causes of his present admission' were given as: 'wretchedness, labours beyond measure, unhealthy abode, poor nourishment, sunstroke'. Before his

A map showing the number of pellagra victims in Italy by province for every thousand farmers, 1881.

ON THE FEMALE SIDE, A.C., a married peasant woman from Meolo (Treviso), was admitted to San Clemente on July 17th, 1877. A.C.'s lunacy had begun the previous June, to the point that she now believed herself 'to be possessed by witches and the devil and struck with these ideas is occasionally taken by violent frenzies'. According to her file: 'She keeps her right hand tightly closed because she believes she has the witches in her fist and she does not want them to escape and cause harm. The constriction is so tight and constant that her hand is swollen.' A.C. was discharged from hospital the following March, her condition 'improved'.

Around half of the patients admitted with symptoms of pellagrous insanity died in hospital, usually as a result of diarrhoea and the resultant wasting caused by the disease. Most of the remainder of victims, like A.F. and A.C., were released after several months. However, doctors knew that such cures were seldom definitive, a realisation that occasionally surfaces in the records. Thus the final words on E.B.'s file (discharged on March 14th, 1880) are: 'Unfortunately, since he is returning to poverty, we shall see him again before too long.'

THE YEARS WHEN THESE sufferers were being treated in Venice saw a heated medical dispute between two physicians who were drawing on a decade's experience of treating pellagra victims in the insane asylums of north-eastern Italy. Underlying it were ongoing attempts to determine the nature of the disease and its cause. Clodomiro Bonfigli was direc-

tor of the insane asylum at Ferrara and an occasional city councillor. Bonfigli's observations had taught him that pellagra was a disease of 'chronic hunger and single foodstuff'. Seven hundred grams of polenta, the average amount eaten by poor in the region for ten months of the year, were insufficient for the body's needs. In addition to being hard to digest, when used as a single food it became increasingly impossible to absorb the 'nutritive principles' of maize. The result was chronic malnutrition. For Bonfigli, the only solution was political and humanitarian action, resolving 'the social question of the impoverishment of the agricultural classes'. Bonfigli argued that pellagra disappeared when the diets of peasants improved, even if by just a little. The strength of his argument lay in positing a direct link between pellagra and a diet based solely on maize and the poverty of the day-labourers. Its weakness lay in the still insufficient understanding of the workings of the metabolism and foods. Bonfigli was unable to demonstrate a direct link between diet and disease, beyond references to generalised statements about the difficulty of assimilation.

His opponent, Cesare Lombroso, tore the theory apart, in a debate that raged from 1879 in various medical publications. Lombroso would achieve international fame as the originator of criminal anthropology, but at the time he was a visiting lecturer in mental illness at the ►

University of Pavia. Lombroso was also director of the insane ward at Pavia's hospital. Most of his experience of pellagra regarded sufferers made mad by the disease. For Lombroso, it was not a question of maize being deficient at a dietary level; rather it was the quality of the maize consumed. Much of it was actually harmful, he believed, because it had become mouldy, either in storage or when made into large loaves of polenta, which were made to last days on end. This 'diseased' maize, when ingested, was what led to pellagra. Lombroso would later claim to have isolated the toxin concerned, to which he gave the name 'pellagrozeine', convinced that he had found the specific cause of the disease. He also claimed to have brought about the symptoms of pellagra in the laboratory.

Lombroso's toxicozeist theory boasted extensive laboratory 'science' and suited the medicine of the time, increasingly successful at finding external agents for diseases. It promised a clear-cut and effective prevention of the disease: eliminating pellagra was simply a matter of prohibiting the buying and selling of spoilt maize products. This suited both the Italian government, which sought a clearly identifiable enemy and practicable solutions to the problem, just as it suited the landowners and social elites, worried about Bonfigli's talk of pellagra as a serious 'social problem'. It helped that Lombroso was then Italy's most famous doctor with an international reputation.

DESPITE RESTING on foundations no stronger than Bonfigli's, Lombroso's theory became the official one, eventually adopted by the state in its response to pellagra. Nevertheless the government in Rome did very little at first. In the 1880s a series of modest bills proposed by the agriculture ministry failed to meet with parliamentary assent. It was only in 1902, in the more liberal political climate of the Giolitti years, that a pellagra bill became law. It was a matter of too little, too late. Too little, because they were aiming at the wrong target: a maize toxin. Too late, because pellagra cases had already begun to decline before the enactment of the 1902 law. Better economic and social conditions were having a more positive effect on the health of the peasantry than the law ever could. The First World War, far from increasing pellagra cases, assisted its decline, as the government imported massive amounts of wheat and sold it at subsidised prices. Peasants willingly shifted from maize polenta to wheat bread (or at least ate the former accompanied by the latter).

For 50 years toxicozeist physicians of the Lombrosan school had looked in vain for the fungus or bacillus, which was supposed to have attacked poorly milled, dried, stored and prepared maize; now the deficiency theorists had their day. It became obvious that the cause was not so much bad maize as a nutritional lack that resulted from subsisting on it. In 1911 the Italian Aristide Stefani wrote of certain 'imponderables' necessary to health but which the body could not manufacture by itself. The following year the Polish biochemist Kasimierz Funk published his findings on the disease beriberi, caused by a diet of husked rice, a process that removes a vital substance from the rice that Funk called a 'vitamine' (from 'vital amine').



Watercolour by A.J.E. Terzi of a young girl in the London Asylum suffering from chronic pellagra, c.1925.

PELLAGRA IN ITALY continued to decline on its own, until there were virtually no new cases. On May 26th, 1927, in the course of his Ascension Day speech celebrating five years of the Fascist regime, Benito Mussolini officially proclaimed that 'the Italian nation has definitely won this battle [against pellagra]'. The official end of pellagra came at a time when cases of the disease were skyrocketing in the United States. The disease seemed to appear from nowhere in the southern states in the early 1900s, so fast that it was regarded as an infectious disease. Singled out were the 'hordes of Italian immigrants who have arrived in the last 30 or 40 years', bringing their 'infection' with them, according to the *Literary Digest* in 1913.

Nonetheless the US medical authorities soon took up the cause. Joseph Goldberger, a medical officer for the newly-founded US Public Health Service, became convinced of the link between low income, individual diet – not polenta, but maize meal, fatback, molasses – and pellagra. He was on the right track. Goldberger was still seeking to identify what he called the 'pellagra preventive factor' when he died in 1929. By the time a deficiency of nicotinic acid (niacin) was identified as the cause, in 1937, pellagra had declined. As in Italy, this was due more to socio-economic changes (in America the result of an invasion of boll weevils destroyed the cotton fields and forced farmers to diversify their crops) than it was to medical and government action.

Over a century and a half, Mattio Lovat and thousands of others suffered from what was essentially a man-made disease. The relationship between maize subsistence and pellagra was evident from the 1760s, as was the poverty underlying both. And yet the social and mercantile elites, national governments and large parts of the medical profession were wary of undertaking anything but cosmetic measures, worried by the threat to the existing social structure and the vested interests posed by more radical solutions. Man-made epidemics are not a thing of the past, however. Think of the dramatic rise in obesity and associated chronic diseases, such as diabetes, in our own society. Caused in part by an energy-rich but nutrient-poor diet of fast food and fizzy drinks, the tussle between health experts, governments, the food industry and the wider society has only just begun.

David Gentilcore is a member of the Centre for Medical Humanities and Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Leicester.

FURTHER READING

Cesar [Cesare] Ruggieri, 'Narrative of the crucifixion of Matthew Lovat, executed by his own hands, at Venice, in the month of July 1805 ... now first translated into English', *The Pamphleteer*, vol. 3, no. 6 (1814), pp. 362–75 (online at: <https://archive.org/details/pamphleteer08valpgooq>).

Henry Holland, 'On the pellagra, a disease prevailing in Lombardy', *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*, vol. 8 (1817), pp. 315–46 (online at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2129002/>).

David Gentilcore, 'Italic scurvy', 'pellarina', 'pellagra': Medical Reactions to a New Disease in Italy, 1770–1830', in *A Medical History of Skin: Scratching the Surface*, J.Reinarz and K.Siena, eds. (Pickering and Chatto, 2013), pp. 57–69.



Though we share a common humanity with people of the past, their world can seem alien to us, says **Mathew Lyons**. Was it just as disconcerting for them, too?

Pilgrims in a Strange Land

WE ARE ALL familiar with the opening line of L.P. Hartley's 1953 novel *The Go-Between*: 'The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.' Like all elegantly expressed truths it quickly became a cliché. And, as such, like all clichés it obscures as much as it reveals. It is difficult not to look on the alienness of the past as indiscriminately and equally estranged from us; just as the ancient Greeks were indifferent to the infinite distinctions among those they labeled *barbaros* – 'barbarians', which in essence means 'those who cannot speak Greek' – so the past can begin to seem homogeneously foreign, lost in translation. Perhaps our search for continuities is in itself a tacit acknowledgement of the voids and spaces we try so hard to ignore as we peer at the vanishing horizon behind us.

It is easy to forget that, for all but a handful of our ancestors, most of their world was no less foreign to them than it is to us, a place of wonder, discomfort and fear, where misapprehensions could quickly proliferate like flies in the heat. This thought occurred to me as I flicked through an example of one of the least explored literary genres of the early modern and medieval world: the pilgrims' travel guide. The book in question, *Informacion for Pylgrymes unto the Holy Londe*, based on the travels of a group of some 40 English pilgrims, was published by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498. It was by no means the first of its kind. Pilgrim itineraries survive from the fourth century, including one written by an Abbess Etheria from Gaul, who crossed both the western and eastern Roman Empires to reach Jerusalem, before continuing on into Egypt. As the crusades inevitably re-opened pilgrimage routes to the east, so they brought forth many more examples of the genre, most notably, perhaps,

those ascribed to Philippus Brusserius Savonensis in the 14th century and Felix Fabbri in the 15th.

One of the most striking things about such guides, to the modern mind, is the lack of a sense of history. The landscapes and sites that are

For all but a handful of our ancestors, most of their world was no less foreign to them than it is to us

described are those of the Bible itself: numinous, immemorial and unchanged. A bow-shot from the city of Hebron, says Philippus, is 'a cave or crypt in which Adam and his wife did penance for a hundred years after the death of their son Abel'. The house where Mary went to school in Jerusalem is hard by the house of Pilate, where her son received his crown of

At the gates of Jerusalem: a detail from the Picture Book of Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, c.1410.



thorns. De Worde can direct you to the place where soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothes. Such things remind us that the immediate living presence of the holy and sacred has ebbed from much of the world.

But De Worde's book is more recognisably a guide book in the modern sense. Of traveling by sea, he says:

Chose you a chambre as nyghe the myddes of the shippe as ye may, for there is leest rolynye or tomblynye to kepe your brayne and stomache in tempre.

And always beware of thieves:

Take gode hede to your knyves ... for the Sarracyns wol go talkyng by you and make gode chere, but thei woll stele from you if they maye.

At the back there is a surprisingly practical glossary of useful phrases – 'It's raining', 'Where is the tavern?', 'You will be paid tomorrow' and so on.

The very familiarity of the form makes the sense of estrangement from the way his pilgrims understand what they are seeing all the more acute. The juxtaposition of a genre that seems wholly familiar to us and a world – indeed a world-view – that is centuries dead somehow makes the latter more comprehensible and human, its reality more tangible. The pilgrims have made a journey through foreign lands, where they have to learn how to talk and how to live to reach a destination that feels intimately known to them but is also wholly unknown. In this sense, at least, they are entirely like us as we work to understand them, these people we want to feel kinship and common humanity with, but who continually surprise us with their stubborn, resisting alienness.

Mathew Lyons is author of *The Favourite: Raleigh and His Queen* (Constable & Robinson, 2011).

REVIEWS

Gail Simmons on a spice odyssey • *Ian Gregson* hails collected war poets • *Michael Rowe* tackles the myth of the strong leader

WHEN INTELLECTUAL historians look back at the first decades of this century they will notice there was a vogue for humanities professors to dissect the social use of their subjects. They will cite Helen Small's *The Value of the Humanities* (2013) or *The Public Value of the Humanities*, edited by Jonathan Bate (2011). They will talk about how, concerned at what they considered a hostile environment under governments of every hue, the academic doctors gathered round as if at a patient's bedside. A dissection, though, is only advisable when the body is cold on the slab. Those future historians may be able to tell us whether the humanities, c.2014, were a hopeless case – or already a corpse.

Those same historians may well place the vogue in the *longue durée*. They would mention that the term 'humanities' entered wide usage in the mid-20th century but can claim a longer pedigree. 'In philosophy the contemplations of man do either penetrate unto God, or are circumferred to nature, or are reverted upon himself. Out of which there do arise three knowledges – divine philosophy, natural philosophy and human philosophy or humanity', said Francis Bacon in 1605. He was drawing on a tradition that identified a cluster of subjects as the studies which define what it is to be human – or, in Latin, the *studia humanitatis*. Cicero used the phrase, but it was only



Detail of Raphael's *Mount Parnassus*, showing Dante, Homer and Virgil, 1510–11.

SIGNPOSTS

Before the Humanities, the Humanists

David Rundle looks at the current state of the humanities, asking whether we can recapture the confidence and broad cultural ambition of the Renaissance's *studia humanitatis*, which sought to define what it is to be human.

re-found by Petrarch in the mid-14th century. It was reborn as a defining concept two generations later, its leading advocate being the future Chancellor of Florence, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), recently well studied by James Hankins in a number of works and in Gary Ianziti's *Writing History in Renaissance Italy* (2012). In a seminally important discussion of 'The Humanist Movement' from the 1950s, Paul Oskar Kristeller traced how the *studia humanitatis* came to be a defined curriculum of five subjects: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. From the term came the cognate for a teacher of these topics – in Latin, *humanista*, in Italian, *umanista*, and eventually, in Elizabethan English, humanist. Kristeller also pointed out that the conceptual noun, 'humanism', had no place in the lexicon of what we call the Renaissance: it was brought into existence in Germany in 1808, in order to define an educational programme based on an appreciation of the classical world. In a 19th-century tradition overseen by Jacob Burckhardt's 1860 *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, humanism came to be seen as the philosophy of the Renaissance; it was against this misreading that Kristeller was reacting.

Of course the term 'humanism' has had a colourful career, as Tony Davies' 1997 survey of the concept helpfully described.

And while Kristeller was correct in detail, many have found his definition too narrow for comfort: in works like *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe*, edited by Anthony Goodman and Angus MacKay (1990), a broader meaning was employed, taking humanism to be respect for the classical world and the lessons that can be learnt from it. It should also be said that Renaissance terminology was not as clear cut as a quick overview might suggest. In an excellent contribution to the I Tatti series (Harvard University Press) – which does for Latin texts of the Renaissance what Loeb's did for classical authors, providing parallel texts in affordable hardbacks – Craig Kallendorf's collection, *Humanist Educational Treatises* (2002), includes the most popular in the 15th century, a tract by the Istrian (modern Croatia) humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio. In it, Vergerio never speaks of *studia humanitatis*, preferring

When future historians look back ... they may be able to tell us whether the humanities, c.2014, were a hopeless case – or already a corpse

more conventional terms like 'good arts' or 'liberal studies'.

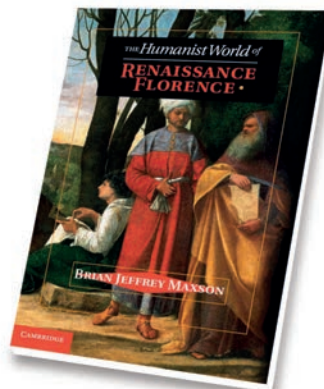
So, Renaissance humanism was not a philosophy, though study of philosophy was within its programme. It was also not simply an agenda for the classroom but it did see value in a certain type of education. It was not the humanities as we know it but our present configuration of knowledge is the inheritor to that tradition. In the midst of our own crisis, does the success story of humanist education have any lessons for us?

One lesson might be that it was not as much of a victory

as is sometimes portrayed. Some recent studies, like Paul Grendler's *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (2002), provide a heroic narrative in which humanism swept aside all in an intellectual blitzkrieg. Yet, in reviewing that work, Robert Black noted how limited the penetration of the *studia humanitatis* in higher education was, even in Italy. Elsewhere the tale often told is of resistance from the ivory towers, with humanists in Germany or in England having to besiege the citadels of learning before taking control – a tale told self-servingly by the humanists themselves with a rhetorical skill well-tuned to exaggerating the challenges they faced and thus the achievements they secured. They presented themselves as being worthy of being insiders, but there was something of the habitual outsider – the oppositional, the counter-cultural – in the programme of the humanists.

The university, in short, was not humanism's home territory. For a scholar such as Leonardo Bruni, what the *studia humanitatis* taught was more practical than any established academic course – not, at root, practical in the sense of wealth creation (though that was rarely far from their minds) but rather in its ability to help men and women realise the potential of themselves and their community by honing their ability to reason, communicate and persuade. It was an education too important to be confined to the classroom. We might doubt their rhetoric, as Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine did in *From Humanism to Humanities* (1986), arguing that the programme taught docility before authority. But we might also wonder whether, in defending the humanities' place within academe's secluded groves, we are guilty of being simply too defensive. Can we recapture the confidence, the broad cultural ambition of our Renaissance precursors? If so, perhaps then the humanities can have their renaissance.

David Rundle



The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence

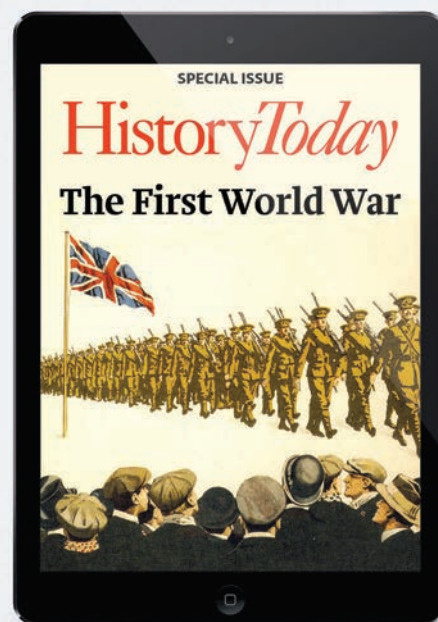
Brian Jeffrey Maxson

Cambridge University Press 308pp £60

HOW DID a small group of humanist scholars change the culture, first of the great city of Florence and later of the whole of Europe? Brian Maxson distinguishes two related and sometimes overlapping types of Florentine humanist. First, the literary humanists, a tight group of scholars who composed works in Latin and who made an intensive study of ancient culture.

Second, a larger group, extending to most of the Florentine elite and many in lower social groups, of 'social humanists', who exchanged letters with the scholars, built up libraries, attended orations or commissioned and read Italian translations of classical texts and humanist writings. Maxson argues that the social humanists' admiration and imitation of the literary humanists explains how scholarly preoccupations had such a wide impact on Florentine culture.

But why did the Florentine elite and those who aspired to associate with it admire the literary humanists so much? Maxson argues that the performance of humanist learning conveyed such prestige that it became a marker of social status in Renaissance Florence, with which many Florentines wanted to be associated. He offers the diplomatic oration as a case study, giving examples of instances in which Florence gained prestige at the Papal court because of the success of its ambassadors in crafting impressive speeches and,



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REVIEWS

conversely, the disgrace implied when members of the *Signoria* were unable to respond appropriately to Latin questions from visiting ambassadors. For Maxson the Florentine diplomatic oration was a cultural gift, in Michel Mauss's sense, which obliged political and cultural reciprocity from its interlocutor states. Maxson shows that recipients of Florentine missions expressed their gratitude, first for the material gifts of prestige artisanal objects, second for the high social status of the ambassadors and, third, for the cultural gift of the oration.

Maxson's book has the great merit of combining social and intellectual history. He pays close attention to the neglected literary source of the Latin oration. He undertakes intensive study of networks of surviving correspondence and exploits the richness of the Florentine archives to build a database of the 2,266 diplomatic positions appointed by Florence between 1394 and 1494. He makes admirable use both of the pioneering social history of Lauro Martines and John Najemy and of the more recent work on education, scholarship and oratory by Robert Black, Ronald Witt, James Haskins and Stephen Milner.

Maxson's analysis of the social networks around humanism, his studies of the social origins of the humanists and his proposal of the links between literary and social humanism are convincing, but his own database undermines his argument for the prestige of humanist diplomatic oratory. If the gift of a humanist oration had been such an important factor in the external prestige of Florence and consequently in social status within the city, then humanists capable of delivering a Latin oration ought to have occupied more than the mere four per cent of diplomatic postings which Maxson assigns to them. That said, his analyses of diplomatic speeches by Gianozzo Manetti, Leonardo Bruni, Matteo Palmieri and Bartolomeo Scala are persuasive. Maxson achieves a compelling and challenging synthesis of intellectual, social and quantitative history.

Peter Mack



A Renaissance Wedding

The Marriage of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla Marzano D'Argona, 26-30 May 1475

**Jane Bridgeman (text tr.),
Alan Griffiths (Latin poems tr.)**

Harvey Miller Publishers 198pp £65

The First Treatise on Museums

**Samuel Quiccheberg's
Inscriptiones, 1565**

**Mark A. Meadow and Bruce
Robertson (eds. and trs.)**

The Getty Research Institute 145pp £16.99

THESE BOOKS show us history at very close quarters. These two translations of 15th- and 16th-century works suggest in detail how luxury goods, such as gilded silver tablewares or mounted nautilus shells, now displayed in museums from the Ashmolean to the V&A, were appreciated by their first owners.

The content and purpose of the original documents were very different: the earlier being an account of the celebrations (in May 1475) marking the marriage of Costanzo Sforza to his Neapolitan bride, Camilla. The original text, in Italian but interspersed with erudite Latin verses in praise of the couple, describes who was present at their wedding, what they wore, what they ate and the spectacular processions and performances laid on as entertainment-cum-dynastic propaganda. Social distinctions were carefully observed throughout the proceedings. Costanzo, Camilla and those at their table drank from stemmed glasses and

ate gilded bread. Other guests had flat-bottomed glasses and bread decorated with only silver leaf. The level of detail in the anonymous account suggests it was written by someone in the Sforza household, presumably with the blessing of Costanzo.

The later work, from 1565, described by its translators as the 'first printed museum treatise', is not a description of a particular collection but an account of what people should collect, why they should collect it and how they should organise and display their collections. Its author was the Antwerp-born physician and scholar Samuel Quiccheberg, who wrote the *Inscriptiones* shortly before his untimely death, aged 38, while in the employ of Albrecht V, Elector of Saxony. Quiccheberg wanted an international market for his work – his brother travelled to Venice with a manuscript of a Latin treatise, where he hoped (unsuccessfully) to have it published. The *Inscriptiones* was also a plea for continued patronage. By extolling the importance of all types of collecting and collections, Quiccheberg bolstered his own position. For while there was, he said, 'no discipline under the sun [...] that might not most properly seek its instruments from these prescribed furnishings', equally it was extremely important 'to have clever men to send to various regions in order to seek out marvellous things'.

Both works reveal a concern in the period for order, social and/or intellectual. Costanzo's and Camilla's wedding was a triumphant demonstration of lordly munificence and civic order; Quiccheberg stresses that study of the collections he prescribes is of indescribable utility to those in government and complains of the lack of interest many German nobles display towards the study of heraldry. Both works also praise the ingenuity and skill of craftsmen, though this is cited to very different effect. Quiccheberg allows that fish specimens might be depicted as still lifes in some collections and specifies

a section that includes human prostheses, or 'things artfully made into the shape of human parts – such as human eyes with their own lids'. The wedding chronicler was concerned with spectacle. The ceiling of the banqueting hall in the Sforza ducal palace was tricked out to resemble a starry sky, 'made from 2,500 mirrors, twinkling with gold and silver, which made it really look like the night sky, although somewhat clearer' and some of the dishes served at the wedding banquet were disturbingly realistic, such as a boar 'cooked in its skin [...] which appeared almost alive, being set amongst a hedge of greenery, so that those carrying it could not be seen'. Not everything went to plan. Rain stopped jousting on the third day and the wedding guests retired to watch an impromptu performance of *The*

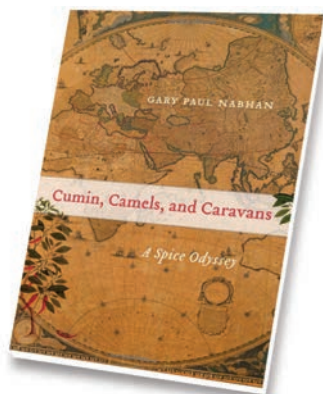
These books show us history at very close quarters ... both works reveal a concern in the period for order, social and/or intellectual

Knight and the Cat. This, too, was suspended when the cat fled.

The translations are provided with thoughtful introductions, scholarly footnotes and extensive bibliographies. Generally the texts read fluidly in English, though a more appropriate translation for the 'morris dancer's satchel', which Quiccheberg suggests a collector should acquire, would have been 'a magician's leather sack'.

'The past', as L.P. Hartley wrote, 'is another country.' These works confirm his observation, but at the same time the love of spectacle and desire to master the world by owning and classifying it are attitudes that modern readers will find familiar.

Kirstin Kennedy



Cumin, Camels, and Caravans

A Spice Odyssey

Gary Paul Nabhan

University of California Press 292pp £19.95

THE CLOSEST we armchair travellers normally get to the olfactory sensation of walking through the globe's most fragrant souks is opening the doors of our spice cupboards. The bottles may be sealed shut but the aroma of their contents — cardamom and cumin, cinnamon and saffron, turmeric and vanilla — wafts towards our nostrils and for a brief moment we are not in our kitchens but strolling through the spice markets of Arabia, Asia or Africa.

It is just such a sensory amble that Gary Paul Nabhan takes us on in this book, with a journey that begins in Dhofar, Oman, home to the unpromisingly spiky *Boswellia sacra* tree. Once cut, its bark bleeds a gum that, when dried, produces frankincense — for centuries the world's most valuable plant product, treasured for its medicinal and spiritual properties. For, although the arid landscapes of Southern Arabia couldn't grow enough of the staple foods that people most needed, they could instead cultivate the culinary spices and aromatics that others most desired.

These aromatics were then traded for grains, pulses and dates from desert oases, with certain tribes (notably the Minaeans of Yemen) acting as intermediaries between nomadic spice growers and sedentary farmers. To sell their wares further afield, camel caravans crossed the vast deserts and small sailboats hugged the shallow coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.

EXHIBITION

BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITIONS, such as the recent one devoted to Veronese, grab the headlines, but the National Gallery's more discreet *Building the Picture: Architecture in Renaissance Painting* is a precious gem of a show.

This engrossing and instructive exhibition is the fruit of a research collaboration between the National Gallery and the University of York. The curators, Caroline Campbell (NG) and Amanda Lillie (York) and their team of experts, are to be congratulated not only for offering fresh interpretations of a number of the gallery's own works (including those by Duccio, Sassetta, Crivelli, Botticelli and Sebastiano del Piombo), but also for pushing forward our understanding of Italian Renaissance painting.

Architecture was never a purely incidental feature of Renaissance painting, it was integral to it. Architecture not only placed the people depicted within a physical space, it created a framework for the composition. As Amanda Lillie explains: 'Almost every aspect of architectural design could be brought to bear on the [picture's] narrative.' Sassetta's exquisite *St Francis Renounces His Earthly Father*, painted around 1440 (shown here), is a good example. The strikingly simple pink architecture depicting an ecclesiastical loggia gives structure to the painting, the vertical piers creating a physical space between the naked Francis, who has symbolically removed his expensive familial robes and is embraced by the seated Bishop, Guido of Assisi, with Francis's distraught father on the left, his arms stretched out into the void, his son now beyond his reach. The physical space created by the architecture is thus also a psychological and spiritual space, as Francis rejects his rich family and his inheritance and adopts the church and a life of poverty. The present Bishop of Rome would approve.

Artists also used architecture to display their skills of *ingegno* and *disegno*, those almost untranslatable words meaning the ability to conceptualise, invent and develop an idea and create a stunning design, normally to the expressed wishes of their patron (and, in Venice, to show their architectural knowledge and skills, cognisant of the fact that the city's guild laws prevented them from practising as architects). The monumental *Judgement of Solomon* (c.1511) by Sebastiano del Piombo

displays this with aplomb. It was commissioned by Andrea Loredan, most probably for the grand reception or *portego* of his impressive new palace in Venice. Sebastiano's carefully calculated, perspectively perfect pavement is designed to be viewed obliquely from the right, where it appears to extend out into the room, drawing in the viewer to the dramatic events unfolding before them. The figures are life-size, Solomon sitting imperiously high-up in his throne, the magnificent architecture of columns receding into the distance, rather like a Roman basilica. It is a powerful and brilliantly constructed composition, meant symbolically to link the patron to the events, emphasising his own good judgment and knowledge of the scriptures. Interestingly, too, under the

unfinished final image, one can discern the ghostly presence of two earlier compositional arrangements of the architecture. These clearly show how hard the artist worked to develop the final composition and that, from the outset, architecture was integral to the painting's narrative.

Rich patrons also sought to emphasise their temporal position by having their own properties depicted in spiritual or historic events, consciously conflating time, the present with antiquity, such as in Domenico Veneziano's *A Miracle of St Zenobius* (c.1442-8), which shows the fourth-century saint restoring to life a widow's child, the miracle set in a street that

would have been recognisable to 15th-century Florentines as the city's Borgo degli Albizzi.

All these and many others themes are explored in detail by Amanda Lillie in the online-only catalogue. There are also essays by different expert authors on every exhibit, which add immeasurably to the value and understanding of the exhibition. However, while the National Gallery is to be commended for launching its first free online-only exhibition catalogue (with no print counterpart), it is a shame that it is so clunky to use, with poor navigation tools and no proper 'gingerbread trail', showing where the viewer is relative to other material in the catalogue. It is particularly unfortunate here, as the curators have shown great care in creating this excellent show, developing its didactic value and preparing the catalogue essays.

Philippa Joseph



Building the Picture

Architecture in Italian Renaissance Painting
Sunley Room, National Gallery, London

Until September 21st, 2014

REVIEWS

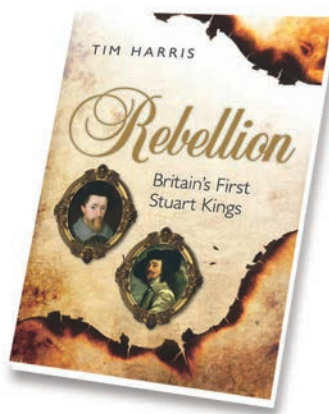
Later, sturdy dhows blown by the trade winds navigated the open seas to further flung continents.

From these first, ancient routes we follow Nabhan along the Frankincense Trail, Spice Route, Silk Road and Camino Real, pausing in the souks of Damascus, the Moorish cities of Andalucía and the markets of Tajikistan. We learn that alongside the traffic in spices came exchanges of languages and cultures, so beginning the long process of globalisation that dominates our world today; a process, Nabhan argues, that began some 3,000 years before the first voyage of Columbus. Such expeditions were driven as much to satisfy hungry minds as by cravings to spice up bland Renaissance fare, especially at the banqueting feasts of the social elites in continental Europe.

Along the way we learn that during the golden age of Islam (c. 750–1257) more cookbooks were written in Arabic than all other languages put together; that the Bactrian (two-humped) camel plying the Spice Roads of Central Asia could travel twice as far and carry twice as much as its one-humped Arabian cousin; that the Spanish city of Granada is named after the pomegranates brought there by the Arabs and that pomodoro (tomato) comes from *Pomo d'Moro*, Fruit of the Moors. En route we are treated to potted histories of our foremost spices and an esoteric selection of recipes, my own favourite being Dates Kneaded with Locusts and Spices, a non-perishable food carried by nomads of the Arabian deserts (method: 'Find a swarm of locusts resting after a long flight').

Nabhan is the ideal travelling companion. With an ancestry that stretches back to the spice-trading Nabheni tribe of Oman, Nabhan is by profession an ethnobotanist and food writer with a clutch of culinary history books under his belt. And he wears his erudition lightly. Although the book is referenced like an academic tome, it reads like a detective story – albeit one with generous pinches of exotic smells and alluring flavours thrown in. Spiced locusts, anyone?

Gail Simmons



Rebellion

Britain's First Stuart Kings

Tim Harris

Oxford University Press 592pp £30

WHAT HAPPENED between the accession of James VI and I in 1603 and the raising of his son's standard at Nottingham in 1642? Had James and Charles ruled in such a way, made certain economic decisions, or preferred particular courses that led somehow to the wars of the 1640s? Tim Harris does not provide a set of 'reasons' for the civil wars of the three kingdoms and the ensuing rebellions and revolutions, but attempts to study how the reigns of each monarch developed. Thus, this is largely a study of the two reigns 'on their own terms' but with a clear sting in the tail as the finale drifts towards conflict.

The opening section, 'How to Reigne Well', outlines Harris' key interests. He looks at the ways in which government of all kinds was conceptualised at the point at which James acceded to the throne. Harris, therefore, looks at divine right, commonwealth, the king's relationship with Parliament, government's interface with religious life and the question of tyranny. Evidence is drawn from sources as varied as royal speeches, polemic tracts and commonplace books. One interesting point made here is the high involvement of the population in some form of up-keeping of the law; the number of officers of the state meant that a huge number of people were involved in one way or another. Hence Harris's fund-

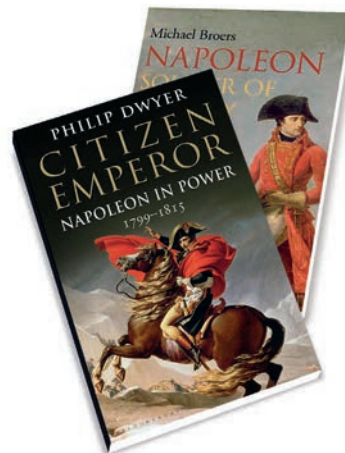
amental interest is in how the three kingdoms were governed, from a multiplicity of viewpoints.

Harris takes us through the reigns of both kings, from James' first forays into government in Scotland to a terrific account of Charles' 'most disastrous blunder' (among many – this one being the attempted arrest of the five members in late 1641). Throughout Harris focuses on the instruments of government – councils, officers, boroughs, policy makers, constituencies – and he is particularly strong on the parliaments in Ireland and Scotland throughout the period in question. Harris' outlines of James and Charles as personalities are well drawn but he is in the business of describing government, so he moves quickly to the ways in which their decisions – and the actions of those around them (and the economic consequences of events outside their scope) – impacted upon those under their rule. A final chapter on 'The Rise of Royalism' elegantly sketches out the situation in 1641–2 as the development of the king's position ensured that he 'was actively striving to construct a royalist party'.

The book is keen to include a perspective on all three kingdoms and this is welcome. The material on Ireland throughout is very useful and maintains a balance hitherto lacking in some other scholarship. Similarly Harris' interest is to demonstrate how decisions and arguments at elite or government level played out in the 'ordinary' world and how the normal citizen might push back. So his breadth of reference is very wide and intentionally broad.

Harris brings an enormous amount of information and scholarship to bear on the tiniest of moments. His thinking is diverse and innovative. At times paragraphs are almost too densely packed with information but Harris is always a precise guide and his sensible and weighty conclusions are well argued.

Jerome de Groot



Napoleon. Soldier of Destiny

Michael Broers

Faber & Faber 585pp £30

Citizen Emperor

Napoleon in Power 1799–1815

Philip Dwyer

Bloomsbury 799pp £30

BRITISH PUBLISHERS possess an infinite capacity for sponsoring big biographies of Napoleon Bonaparte, evidently assuming the existence of a ready market. Two more blockbusters have now appeared, together weighing in at over 1,300 pages. They are respectively the first and second instalments of two-volume works. Broers ends his initial tome in the autumn of 1805, with the Emperor Napoleon about to engage with the superior forces of the Third Coalition; Dwyer begins his second volume where he finished the first (published in 2007), with General Bonaparte completing his 'Path to Power', following the coup d'état of Brumaire (November 1799). There is thus some significant chronological overlap and several similarities between the books. Both authors are academic historians, as opposed to the 'professional biographers' who regularly try their hand at Napoleon. Broers, like Dwyer, draws on current research, notably a new, enlarged edition of Napoleon's letters. So what distinguishes them?

In his introduction, Broers states that the fresh epistolary material 'makes a new biography imperative' and he puts the recently collected correspondence to good use, frequently citing Napoleon in

his own words. Indeed he devotes a fair amount of space to the Buonaparte family, from their Corsican origins to their sibling rivalry, not least after Napoleon made good and excluded two of his brothers from the imperial succession. Broers draws on his own research to emphasise the importance of Bonaparte's political, as well as military, apprenticeship

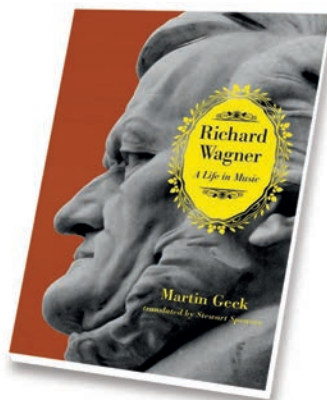
Two more Napoleon blockbusters ... Broers is not uncritical of Napoleon, but Dwyer is keener to stress shortcomings

in northern Italy, before he went on to grasp power in France. He also describes the repressive, as well as reconciliatory side, of the Bonapartist system under the Consulate, down to 1804, especially the way its gendarmerie and special courts dealt with those who refused to be won over by 'great reforms' in administration, religion and the law. Closely focused on Napoleon's fortunes, this biography takes a more thematic approach. It is written with some verve, albeit with the odd slip when referring to the rebellions in Provence in 1793 (when Bonaparte was first brought into the limelight), or the plebiscites used to seal Napoleonic rule with popular approval as he consolidated his authority.

Broers is not uncritical of Napoleon, but Dwyer is keener to stress his shortcomings. He highlights weaknesses during the creative Consular period, suggesting that, while ending the revolutionary schism, the Concordat with the Pope simultaneously inaugurated a century of conflict between Church and State in France. Later, under the heading 'Hubris', he deals with the declining years of the Empire, when Napoleon overreached himself in the East and was unwilling to make peace. Nemesis came hard on its heels, yet Dwyer also emphasises the revolutionary dimension that made it so difficult

to take the measure of Napoleon. The 'Citizen Emperor' turned into a despot, before further complicating his identity during the final fling of the Hundred Days in 1815, when he briefly reinvented himself as the returning people's ruler. Dwyer exploits a series of visual images of Napoleon to trace his protean character and offer insight into the ways he sought to present himself and was perceived by others. His is the more detailed account, with 200 pages of endnotes and bibliography. It contains many fascinating nuggets of information, such as the tale of the hot air balloon that lofted a giant crown above Paris to celebrate the imperial coronation in 1804, but severed its moorings and ended up in Italy. While both Dwyer's volumes are now out, Broers has paused for the moment, with Napoleon facing a mighty military challenge, his destiny once more in the balance.

Malcolm Crook



Richard Wagner

A Life in Music

Martin Geck

(Stewart Spencer, trans.)

Chicago University Press 464pp £24.50

IN 1923 Richard Wagner's son, Siegfried, appealed to Bayreuth Festival audiences to refrain from responding to Hans Sachs' paeon to 'holy German art' at the close of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* by singing the German national anthem. 'Art is what matters here!', he declared, lest increasingly boorish far-right political voices scare away Jewish patrons. The controversial 1951 re-opening of the

festival witnessed a knowing re-instatement, Siegfried's sons, Wieland and Wolfgang, requesting: 'In the interests of trouble-free progression of the Festival, we kindly request that you refrain from political debate and discussion on the Festival Hill. "Art is what matters here!"'

Such is the message of Martin Geck's biography, which skilfully interweaves themes from history with discussion of the operas. Geck does not deny Wagner's political concerns. How could he? This is a composer who fought alongside Mikhail Bakunin on the barricades in Dresden and who would certainly have faced a prison sentence for involvement in the 1849 Saxon uprising, had not Franz Liszt ushered him into Swiss exile. Moreover, Wagner declared that the purpose of his four-part operatic cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, was 'to make clear to the men of the Revolution the meaning of that Revolution, in its noblest sense'.

Geck admits a political 'taint' to certain works. *Lohengrin*, for instance, is 'incapable of concealing its affinities with nationalism and National Socialism'. Yet that is not Wagner's fault, we read; had German unification, let alone Nazism, not come along, we should read the work very differently. In a sense, it is implied, it would now for us actually be a different work, the historian's difficulty of how to treat with an artwork and its reception thus creditably, artfully considered. Geck throws a bone to detractors in order to attempt an anti-political rescue. He claims Siegfried – hero of *The Ring*, after whom Wagner named his son – as 'entirely unpolitical', George Bernard Shaw being closer to the mark in dubbing this thoroughgoing anarchist 'Siegfried Bakoonin'. In attempting to save Wagner, Geck somewhat neuters him. Wagner defends himself: against Hitler, *The Ring's* proclamation of the futility of all forms of power. More generally, dismal contemporary politics would be enlivened by

an injection of Wagner's social-ist critiques of property, law, marriage and the state. The Romantic artist to the nth power, Wagner strove to move, to incite, to (re-)educate. Not only the subject matter of his operas but their very conception, an attempted renewal of Greek tragedy, stood as a savage indictment of a world in which art had become 'industry, its moral purpose the acquisition

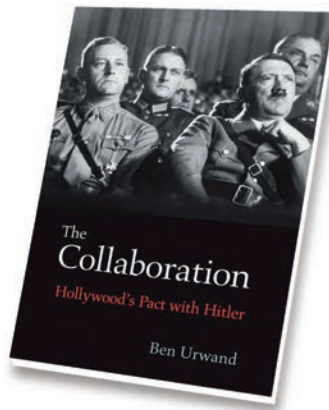
Had German unification, let alone Nazism, not come along, we would read Wagner's work very differently

of money, its aesthetic purpose the entertainment of the bored'.

Geck's biography is commendably self-reflexive. He points to Wagner's lack of distinction between 'life' and 'art'; he shows awareness of the nature of history as writing, even briefly discussing 'language games' and Hayden White's rapprochement between history and poetry. Such an approach is perfectly possible, indeed desirable, for a dangerous, radical Wagner.

Stefan Herheim, in his Bayreuth production of *Parsifal*, pulled down a final curtain on the alleged 'New Bayreuth' of Wieland and Wolfgang by displaying onstage their 1951 declaration as part of a progression through *Parsifal* and its history, which, swastikas and all, made it clear how abidingly political and historical a drama this always had been. With a little help from Herheim, Wagner rescued – in Wagner's language, 'redeemed' – his own work. Geck's fine synthesis deserves to be read, especially as beautifully translated by Stewart Spencer; perhaps, however, it is he and we who still require redemption through Wagner.

Mark Berry



The Collaboration
Hollywood's Pact with Hitler
Ben Urwand

Harvard University Press 327pp £19.95

HITLER LOVED the movies. He watched a film every night after dinner with his entourage. Across the pond, Hollywood saw Germany as one of its biggest export markets. There was money to be made from distributing films there. These two facts are the starting point of Ben Urwand's study of Hollywood's relationship with Nazi Germany.

Control of the film industry was a central part of Hitler's and Goebbels' plan for propaganda in the Third Reich. Part of this involved censorship of foreign films that did not sing the Nazis' tune. Article 15 of a law regulating film imports made it clear that Berlin could ban a company from working in Germany, if it produced a film that was offensive to German sensibilities. This gave the Nazi consul in Los Angeles, Georg Gyssling, considerable influence. He could not only demand cuts or changes to films to be shown in Germany, but in all versions of the films to be shown internationally.

Instead of showing Gyssling the door, Hollywood went out of its way to work with him. Urwand chronicles several occasions in which he was listened to intently. Some projects did not happen because of fear of his disapproval. A Paramount film about the sinking of the *Lusitania* was dropped. A more aggressively anti-Hitler film called *The Mad Dog of Europe* was scrapped because of fears that it would harm US business interests in Germany. When American films

were banned in Germany, such as *The Prizefighter and the Lady* (1933) because it starred Max Baer, a Jew who was known to be hostile to Hitler, the studios continued to do business with Germany. After *Kristallnacht*, Goebbels produced a blacklist of 60 Hollywood figures whose work would not be allowed in Germany. The studios simply removed their credits from German versions and continued to distribute there in 1940 and 1941 up to the point at which America entered the war.

The Hollywood studios not only agreed not to attack the Nazis but they also decided not to defend the Jews and changes were made in a series of films such as *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), where references to Alfred Dreyfus being a Jew were removed. Although *The Mortal Storm* (1940) finally dealt with the Nazi persecution of a minority group, all references to the fact that they were Jews were cut from the final version. The whole story of how Hollywood made an accommodation with Nazi antisemitism seems even more bizarre because many of the studio bosses were themselves Jewish immigrants.

This is a story about German censorship and the more frequent

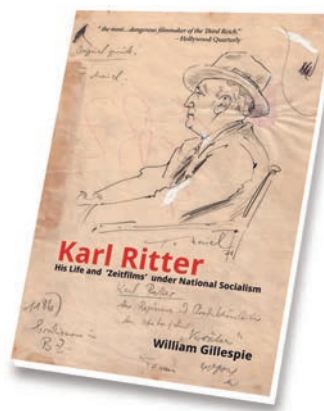
The story of how Hollywood made an accommodation with Nazi anti-semitism seems bizarre because many of the studio bosses were Jewish immigrants

and sinister self-censorship by Hollywood. The notorious Hays Office put pressure on studio chiefs like Louis B. Mayer of MGM not to make certain films such as the anti-fascist *It Can't Happen Here* to avoid offending the German government. The word used at the time to describe this was *Zusammenarbeit*, 'collaboration'. By calling his book *The Collaboration* and

implying that Hollywood collaborated with Hitler, Urwand has certainly created a storm in America. The *New Yorker* film critic was so outraged that he has demanded to know how Harvard could have published the book.

Urwand's book is thoroughly researched but is rather rambling, occasionally repetitious and makes some strange statements. For instance, it is bizarre to claim that Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* is about a Hitler speech. It is a visual evocation of a creed that celebrates the submission of the individual into a disciplined mass, whose function is to show total obedience to the leader. It is also daft to say that Hitler controlled the German newsreel industry because he made a few corrections of newsreel scripts. And there is no mention of *March of Time*, which consistently warned cinema audiences of the evils of the Nazi state. Despite this, the book is a fascinating take on the shady politics of Hollywood and should be read by anyone interested in going behind the glamour of 1930s cinema.

Taylor Downing



Karl Ritter
His Life and 'Zeitfilms' under National Socialism
William Gillespie

German Films Dot Net 167pp \$34.95

EVERYONE HAS heard of Leni Riefenstahl, the pre-eminent cinematic celebrant of the Third Reich. Comparatively few people have heard of Karl Ritter (1888-1977), even though he has been called by one historian 'the most dangerous film-maker of the

Third Reich', in part because of the popularity of his films with German youth. The reason for his neglect is the absence of a biography and the inability to see his films – until now. William Gillespie has had access to Ritter's diaries, his speeches and his own account of his escape from the Soviets at the end of the war and has thus been able to produce the fullest account of his life to date.

Ritter, who was a pioneer aviator (gaining his pilot's licence as early as 1911) and a decorated soldier in the First World War (awarded the Iron Cross in 1918), entered the German film industry in 1926, working as a poster designer and then a scriptwriter. He was an enthusiastic member of the Nazi Party from 1925 onwards. So it was no surprise that he produced one of the earliest pro-Nazi feature films, *Hitlerjunge Quex*, in 1933. He was given his own production unit at the leading German film company, Ufa, where he worked on a series of films promoting the idea of German nationalism, militarism and heroic sacrificial death on behalf of the Führer.

Ritter advocated the production of 'Zeitfilms', describing them as 'the highest achievement of the cinematic art'. These were films which set out to capture 'the spirit of the age' by providing cross-sections of real life from contemporary Germany. He denounced the films of the Weimar era for stressing poverty, misery, sickness and despair and called for films that promoted courage, optimism and personal heroism. In this spirit he made a trio of films about the experiences of German soldiers in the First World War, another trio of films denouncing the Russians and Bolshevism and then a further trio celebrating the Luftwaffe.

But Gillespie reveals that, despite the box office success of his films, Ritter regularly ran into trouble with the German authorities. The Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg declared his films to be patriotic enough but insufficiently National Socialist and

Goebbels' diaries are scattered with references to Ritter's films as being 'naive' or 'botched'. Unable to capture the reality of the war on film as Germany started losing, Ritter returned to active service with the Luftwaffe in 1945. At the end of the war, like so many other Nazis, Ritter emigrated to Argentina, where, having failed to resurrect his film career, he died in 1977.

Several of Ritter's films have recently become available on DVD in English-subtitled prints, notably one of his greatest successes, *Stukas* (1941). It is an account of the experiences of one Stuka unit during the Battle of France in 1940. In making it, Ritter drew on his flying expertise and his First World War combat experience and went up with a Stuka squadron over Caen. It is a technically accomplished piece of work. Ritter, a gifted graphic artist, pioneered the use of storyboards in film-making and developed sophisticated special effects for his aviation films, blending newsreel footage, scale models and back projection. On one level the film is a celluloid symphony of destruction, with recurrent scenes of dive bombing by the Stukas, obliterating forts, bridges, tanks and convoys and periodically engaging in aerial battles with the enemy Spitfires. But these scenes are interspersed with others featuring boisterous male camaraderie among the pilots, complete with banter, boasting, joking, grumbling and chatter about women and drinking, as well as a fatalistic acceptance of the loss of comrades. However the emphasis is on the glory of sacrificial death. When one young pilot dies, his mother writes a letter expressing her pride in his death and the squadron commander (Carl Raddatz) and the unit's doctor (O.E. Hasse) celebrate the nature of the sacrifice, quoting Holderlin's poem 'Death for the Fatherland'. For once, Goebbels was delighted, pronouncing the film 'terrifically good with magical aerial photography'.

Jeffrey Richards

WAR POETRY

'NEVER SUCH INNOCENCE again', Philip Larkin wrote 50 years ago in 'MCMXIV', defining, with characteristically potent simplicity, why 1914 receives such relentless focus. The current centenary commemorations are not only about war, but about how wars become turning points, and how the significance of First World War poetry has been retrospectively magnified by the extent to which the modern has traced itself back to the cultural trauma inflicted by the events of 1914-18.

The New Oxford Book of War Poetry includes Larkin's poem and also many familiar First World War poems whose fame arises partly from a lyric intensity, heightened by the knowledge that the poets really saw and heard and smelled the incidents which they recount. Wilfred Owen, in particular, can therefore be compared to other poets, such as Sylvia Plath and Dylan Thomas, who are renowned far beyond literary circles and whose fame is dependent not just upon literary quality (which is present to a high degree in all three) but is linked also to a perception of authenticity, a vivid sense that the poems are organically connected to the turbulent and short life.

The poems of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney derive their power, however, not just from this lyric authenticity, but also from the way that they draw upon it to describe a major historical event in terms of personal experience. The loss of innocence by British culture, as diagnosed by Larkin, can be read synecdochically in these poems as a rite of passage by these young men towards an appalled disillusionment. So they

This paradigm of the war poet has exercised such an influence that it has drawn attention away from other possible modes and it is here that Jon Stallworthy's anthology is especially valuable. It is generous in its selection of First World War poets and also includes those who were combatants in other wars, such as Keith Douglas in the Second World War and Yusef Komunyakaa in the Vietnam War. However, it also includes poems about war by writers who never fought in one and therefore cannot approach the subject lyrically, but must treat it through narrative or discursive modes, or through dramatic monologue. It also has commendable historical depth and so hints at the different ways that war has been understood (and

the different ways in which it has been fought) in different periods. It starts with passages from the Bible and Homer and advances through Chaucer and Spenser, through Marvell and Milton and then the Romantic poets, towards the 20th century. Its creation of this extensive context insists upon a tellingly broad and flexible definition of the genre, so that poetry is celebrated in its ability to explore the subject of war in all its ramifications.

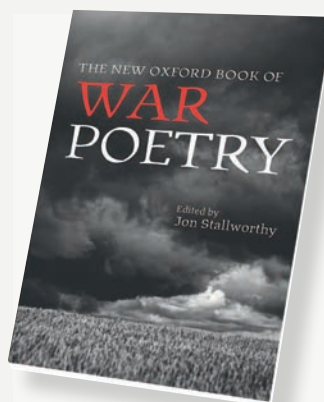
The New Oxford Book of War Poetry is therefore exemplary as an anthology because it defamiliarises both its authors and its genre. So the book surprises John Donne, John Milton, Robert Browning,

Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson and Arthur Rimbaud in moments when they seem simultaneously like and yet unlike themselves and so broadens the understanding of these writers and also broadens the understanding of the range of ways in which a poem can discuss war.

Reviewers of anthologies like to point out what is missing, but I would rather say that this is certainly the best of its kind and that its choices should be commended for not shunning the obvious, while also including some fascinating lesser-known poems and even some offbeat ones, such as Guillaume Apollinaire's shape poem 'Calligram, 15 May 1915'. Great as well to see in this context marvellous poems such as James Fenton's 'Dead Soldiers', with its shockingly matter-of-fact speaker anecdotally describing horrors.

So my one complaint is about the reference, on the dust jacket, to 'Louise MacNiece'.

Ian Gregson



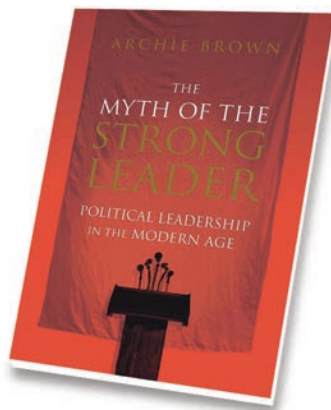
The New Oxford Book of War Poetry

Jon Stallworthy (ed.)

Oxford University Press 406pp £16.99

***This anthology is exemplary
... poetry is celebrated in
its ability to explore the
subject of war in all its
ramifications***

repeatedly describe soldiers who 'sang their way', as Owen puts it in 'The Send-Off', to the trains that carried them from their home towns, but who were sent 'like wrongs hushed-up' and will 'creep back, silent', if at all, 'to village wells,/ Up half-known roads'.



The Myth of the Strong Leader
Political Leadership in the Modern Age
Archie Brown

The Bodley Head 466pp £25

ARCHIE BROWN promises an argumentative book and he does not disappoint. The case he presents is clear: so-called 'strong leaders' generally prove ineffective. This is because 'strong' typically means an inability to accept collective decision-making. However, despite historical experience, a substantial body of contemporary opinion, including of serious political commentators, persists in equating 'strong' leadership with effective leadership. The aim of this book is to dispel this myth and it does so by drawing on a wide range of examples, illustrative of 20th-century regimes categorised as democratic, revolutionary, authoritarian and totalitarian.

The range of leaders subject to analysis is of necessity selective and one can also question Brown's categorisation of leadership types. The most effective he labels 'transformational', as they played a decisive role in introducing systemic change. In this category he includes Adolfo Suárez, De Gaulle, Gorbachev, Deng Xiaoping and Mandela. Next down come the 'redefining' leaders, a category that also includes three British prime ministers, Asquith, Attlee and Margaret Thatcher. Their governments shifted the political centre of gravity of the country. Of the three, Brown is especially admiring of Attlee, on account of his mastery of collective government and capacity to entertain the possibility

that others might know better. It is for Thatcher's inability to do either that Brown is less than fulsome in his praise of her premiership, despite his acknowledgement of her importance in engaging with Gorbachev. Other examples cited in this book extend to non-democratic regimes the argument that collective-style leadership tends to prove more effective, while conversely showing that the worst blunders occur when non-democratic leaders act autocratically. Stalin's misreading of Hitler's intentions in early 1941, Mao's 'Great Leap Forward' launched in 1958 and Khrushchev's deployment of missiles to Cuba in 1962 are highlighted as 'bad' examples drawn from the Communist states.

President Kennedy's performance during the Cuban Missile Crisis would tend to challenge many of the book's conclusions and it is therefore a pity that Brown does not look at this episode in greater depth from the

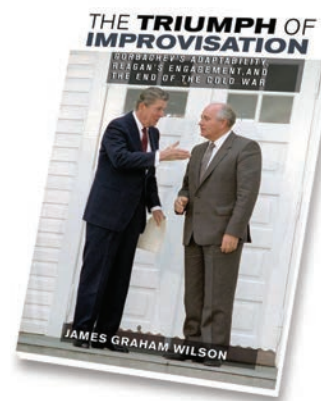
An eminently readable book ... it avoids reducing 'good' leadership to a dogmatic formula or list of general principles

US perspective. Arguably, the US president acted in precisely the manner that Brown finds so reprehensible in leaders like Blair, whom he dismisses as one of Britain's top three 20th-century foreign policy blunderers (the other two being Chamberlain and Eden). Did not Kennedy, like Blair, ignore expert military advice and also bypass formal governmental structures? Yet while in Kennedy's case such actions prevented war, in Blair's they led to Britain's participation in one. Brown's response, one suspects, would be to point to another argument made in this book, namely that good leadership cannot be reduced to a set of immutable principles that apply in every context. A leadership style that was effective in Washington in

1962 was not necessarily appropriate in Westminster and Whitehall in 2003.

This is an eminently readable and indeed convincing book, not least because it avoids reducing 'good' leadership practice to a set of dogmatic formula or list of general principles. Instead, it convinces by more modestly framing the argument in terms of balance of probabilities: yes, sometimes 'strong' leaders meet with success, but more often they suffer setbacks or create disasters. The weight of evidence provided by the history of the 20th-century, as presented here, is so overwhelming that it remains a mystery why so many should continue to think otherwise.

Michael Rowe



The Triumph of Improvisation
Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement and the End of the Cold War
James Graham Wilson

Cornell University Press 280pp £18.50

THIS IS one of the better books on the end of the Cold War. Unlike many American accounts, it is not – at least until its very last paragraph – triumphalist in tone. Wilson recognises that Mikhail Gorbachev was by some distance the most important political actor in the dramatic sequence of events between 1985 and 1991. On the American side he rightly identifies Ronald Reagan, George Shultz and George H.W. Bush as the people who mattered most. He is particularly good at giving Secretary

of State Shultz his due. Reagan's policies were both very general and inconsistent, although he genuinely wanted to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to cement peaceful relations with a changed Soviet Union. Shultz gave practical substance to this foreign policy and established constructive relations with the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, and with Gorbachev. There were many in the Reagan administration (especially in the CIA and the Pentagon) who viewed Gorbachev as a more dangerous adversary than his Soviet predecessors, because of his ability to woo the West. They refused to take seriously the notions that he would liberalise, still less democratise, the system he had inherited, that he would ever permit the countries of Eastern Europe to become non-Communist and independent and that he would jettison Marxism-Leninism.

Wilson's main argument is that nothing that happened during the end of the Cold War was planned. Reagan wanted to put an end to Soviet expansionism, as he saw it, through strengthening still further the US's military defences, but he envisaged a continuing Soviet Union, with whose leader he was willing to sign agreements reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear arsenals. Clearly, it was no part of Gorbachev's initial project that the East European countries should go their separate ways, that Germany should be united – still less, that the Soviet Union itself should end with separate statehood for each of its 15 republics. Gorbachev developed, though, from reformer of the existing Soviet system to transformational leader, adapting to the unintended consequences, both international and domestic, of the systemic change he introduced.

The main strength of Wilson's account lies in his use of recently declassified American documents, as befits a historian employed at the State Department. He also uses Russian-language materials,

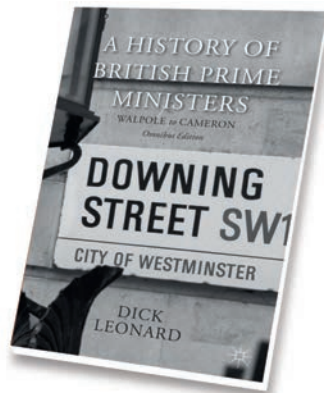
but is not always sure footed on Soviet politics. Thus, he writes of a *Pravda* correspondent 'widely believed to have close ties to the CPSU and the KGB'. Since *Pravda* was the Communist Party's most authoritative newspaper, its correspondents were by definition not only CPSU members but of good party standing – and the party, especially in the post-Stalin era, stood above the KGB. Moreover, Konstantin Chernenko was not, *pace* Wilson, chosen as Soviet leader in 1984 because he was a hardliner but because he would restore security of tenure to his Politburo colleagues and leave Andrei Gromyko and Dmitri Ustinov undisturbed in their conduct of Soviet foreign and defence policy.

Errors on points of detail (there are a number) are outweighed by Wilson's generally balanced interpretation, except in his concluding paragraph, in which he suddenly turns triumphalist. Gorbachev, he says, 'did not believe that he lost the Cold

Wilson recognises that Gorbachev was by some distance the most important political actor in the dramatic events from 1985 to 1991

War. But he did. And because he did, a generation of human beings in the United States, Russia, and elsewhere on this planet grew up innocent of the specter of a nuclear holocaust'. Gorbachev's vision of a transformed Russia as a co-operative and integral part of a 'common European home' is a far cry from the more nationalist, intolerant and belligerent outlook of Russian leaders today. That development can hardly be divorced from NATO's expansion into the former Soviet Union and the treatment of Russia as if it were, indeed, the loser of a war.

Archie Brown



A History of British Prime Ministers, Walpole to Cameron

Dick Leonard

Palgrave Macmillan 881pp £140

THIS IS an omnibus edition of Leonard's previous three books on 18th, 19th and 20th century premiers, plus new chapters on Blair, Brown and Cameron. It contains detailed chapters on all 53 prime ministers from Robert Walpole to the present. All the entries are informative, well composed and succinct. The less well-known premiers are not neglected by comparison with the leading figures. The main focus is on politics but attention is also paid to the private life and personal character of the prime ministers. Leonard provides a dispassionate and candid assessment of their various strengths and weaknesses. Although he was briefly a Labour MP, he displays no obvious partisanship when dealing with recent premiers. Blair is described as 'a fallen idol', Brown as an uncertain and paranoid premier and Cameron as Blair in a minor key. The book also contains illustrations of all the premiers and a useful appendix listing their exact tenure of office.

Inevitably, however, the book has some limitations. The individual assessments rely heavily on the research and views of other historians and there is little about the premiers' ideologies or the constitutional context. The assumption that Walpole was the first prime minister overlooks a host of *de facto* premiers in previous centuries. Walpole himself, as Leonard admits, shared power with his wealthy Norfolk relative,

Charles Townshend, for the first decade of his 'premiership'. More importantly, the office of 'Prime Minister' was unknown to the constitution until the 20th century and the official position of most, but not all, premiers was First Lord of the Treasury. Also, until the 20th century the premier was only *primus inter pares* in the Cabinet and many of his colleagues had independent wealth and political authority. The earlier premiers, moreover, owed their authority mainly to the support they received from the monarch. In the 18th century, with only very brief exceptions, the prime minister was the personal choice of the monarch, whose patronage was essential to maintain his office and authority. The Victorian premiers courted or tried to accommodate a demanding Queen, while George V played a key role in persuading Ramsay MacDonald to form a National Government in 1931.

Leonard ends his chronological survey without any comparative conclusion, although there were some significant commonalities shared by many of the premiers. Before the 20th century a majority of them belonged to a wealthy aristocratic elite, who had been educated at Eton and then either at Oxford or Cambridge. The last aristocratic Eton and Oxford premier was Sir Alec Douglas-Home but the next five premiers had all been to state schools, although three of them then went on to Oxford. The Oxford link was continued by Blair and then by Cameron, who also went to Eton, thus reviving that old connection.

Half of all the 53 prime ministers were educated at Oxford, whereas only 14 prime ministers attended Cambridge. The imbalance between the two universities reflected the collegiate predominance of Christ Church, Oxford, which produced 13 premiers. But over the last century only two prime ministers were at Christ Church, whereas eight went to other Oxford colleges. Oxford's predominance has been variously attributed to its close links with Eton, the oratorical training provided by the Union and other

debating clubs and, more recently, the education provided by its Philosophy, Politics and Economics degree. Oxford's traditional links with the Conservative party, which was electorally dominant for most of the 20th century, also assisted its premiership predominance. But Oxford also educated three of the six Labour premiers as well as its current leader.

Leonard's survey lacks an analytical dimension but it provides the best general account we have of the 52 men and one woman who have held the office of prime minister. As such, it is a considerable achievement, which should appeal to a wide readership.

Roland Quinault

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Gail Simmons is a travel writer specialising in the Middle East.

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No Comparison

I read with interest the article 'Sarajevo's Elusive Assassin' by Tim Butcher (July 2014). Butcher shares the fault that so many British historians – and politicians – have had in their assessment of Irish history, essentially a need to grossly simplify its intricacies.

Butcher says Vienna's attack on Serbia had about as much legitimacy as a declaration of war by Britain on Ireland in retaliation for Lord Mountbatten's murder in 1979. I am an Irish expat living in Poland, but I lived in Ireland at the time of the Mountbatten assassination. Where is the parallel between the Serbian military intelligence's connivance in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 to that of the Irish government's complete innocence in the death of Mountbatten? Who is the Irish equivalent of Apis (the alias for the head of Serbian military intelligence)?

Too little has been made of the Irish government's restraint during the Troubles. Too often an undoubted sympathy that many people in the Republic have had for a united Ireland is identified as supporting extremists.

Although there are fascinating comparisons between the complexities of Balkan and Irish history, we must admit a definite link between the Serbian administration and the Black Hand. This link does not exist between the Irish government and the republican extremists who assassinated Mountbatten.

On the 100th anniversary of a visit by the reigning British monarch to Ireland, Elizabeth II was welcomed heartily in 2011. On the 100th anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination this summer, a monument to Princip was unveiled in Serbia.

Charles Wielgus Barry
Warsaw, Poland

All at Sea

Janie Hampton's article 'Victory on Lake Nyasa' (July) gives a lucid account of the gunboat battles in this remote theatre of the First World War. However, the battle of August 14th, 1914 was not the first naval action of the war. This did indeed take place in the North Sea. The German minelayer *Königin Luise* was intercepted by British ships off Harwich and the destroyer HMS *Lance* is credited with firing the first shot of the First World War at 10.30am on August 5th. The *Königin Luise* was sunk. Returning towards Harwich the British ships ran into the minefield that the *Königin Luise* had laid and the light cruiser HMS *Amphion* was sunk by a mine at 7.05am on August 6th.

These actions took place in the first 32 hours of the war and cost the lives of over 220 men.

Professor Peter Rowley-Conwy
Durham

National Redemption

Germany's postwar economic recovery, described in Paul Legg's article ('It's Over! Over!', July), is one of the most important stories of the 20th century.

Ruined and defeated after the Second World War and with the shame of trials for genocide and war crimes after 1945, Germany and Japan stunned the world with their postwar economic recoveries. By the 1970s both had become stable and prosperous democracies.

During its 1950s economic miracle, or *Wirtschaftswunder*, the Federal Republic provided other European countries with many of the machine tools and capital goods that they needed for their own post-1945 prosperity and industrialisation. The decision of the western allies to join their zones of occupied Germany into a single area and the introduction of industrial planning in

1952 with the European Coal and Steel Community were the two most important reasons for the rapid West German recovery,

Shouvik Datta
Bromley, Kent

Exceptional Article

What is especially interesting about Onyeka's article, 'Black Equestrians' (July), is not just that he has found details of the many Africans present in Britain during the Georgian period, but that he has delved deep into the lives of individuals, such as the gentlemanly and influential Ignatius Sancho. In doing so, Onyeka has painted us a picture of how the African interacted and manoeuvred within it. His research reveals the attitudes, culture and norms of that era, assisting us in our understanding of how the African would have been regarded and how they, too, regarded themselves.

The general population of England and worldwide are likely to look back at Georgian England (and earlier) and assume the African was merely a slave or a lowly servant, but Onyeka's research offers facts that clearly dispute this and demonstrates that there are many exceptions to this notion.

Tanya Thompson
via email

Charging for Cromwell

Further to Marguerite Lipscomb's letter (June), it is not simply a case of charging each of 11,000 visitors £2 and immediately resolving the funding crisis suffered by the Cromwell Museum. Indeed a number of visitors are already charged for attending the museum, if they do so as part of a group or if they attend the various talks that are advertised.

Of the 11,000 visitors, a percentage will attend for the very reason that it is a free attraction, so charging an entrance fee

would reduce the number of visitors. To increase any proposed entrance fee to cover a reduction in visitor numbers will further reduce the number attending. On top of this the very fact that money is being taken within the venue will result in increased costs caused by handling, insuring and banking the cash.

There is a reluctance among the public to pay for local authority operated 'educational facilities' such as libraries, the cost of which are seen as being covered by local taxation. A more imaginative solution might be for the venue to be taken over by a local group who could operate it as a charitable trust. In addition, the public may be more willing to pay an entrance fee to a local charity than the local authority.

David Hearn
Wallasey, Cheshire

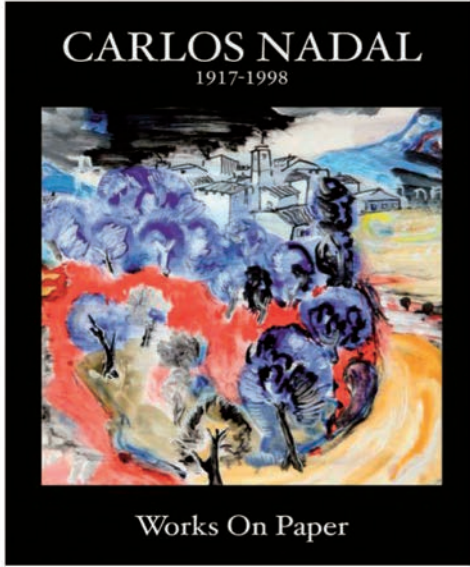
Daunting Hugh

In his fascinating piece on Hugh Trevor Roper (January 2014), Blair Worden writes: 'In 1977 he licked the MP Tam Dalyell's polemicised book against the movement, *Devolution: The End of Britain*, in to literary shape.' Absolutely correct.

As an undergraduate I had to submit essays to some very demanding supervisors, but no tutorial supervision was quite as daunting as sitting in Trevor Roper's Melrose study a quarter of a century later when I had been a tough-minded MP for 15 years. He was a supreme word-smith, conjuring up *le mot juste*. Moreover, he would be angry though not surprised that we are to have a referendum on September 18th. His pen would have fulminated against the folly of the Better Together campaign promising more powers for the Edinburgh parliament in the event of a No vote.

Tam Dalyell
Linlithgow, West Lothian

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Photo: Loomis Dean

An iconic photograph of Ian Fleming behind the wheel of a Blower Bentley, taken by veteran Life Magazine photographer Loomis Dean in 1962, is the feature of the miniature sheet.

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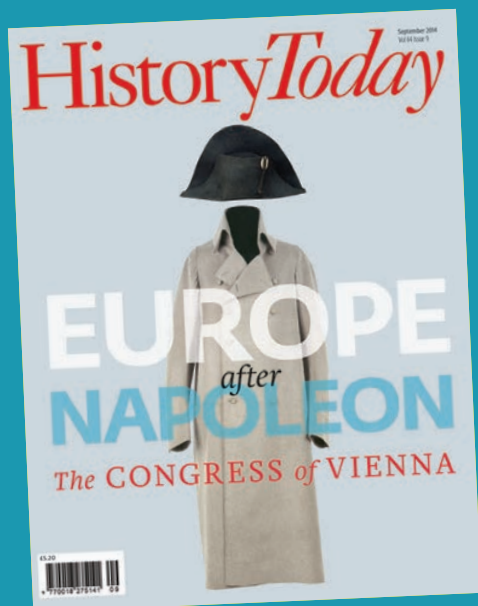
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July's Prize Crossword



The winner for July is David Dare, Edinburgh.

Coming Next Month

Flower of Scotland

A renewed interest in Anglo-Scottish history has been one positive result of the referendum on Scottish independence, which takes place on September 18th. Linda Porter examines one of the more difficult episodes in the countries' shared pasts: the fraught relationship between James V of Scotland (right) and his 'wicked uncle', Henry VIII. Having lost his father along with the flower of Scottish nobility at Flodden, James became king at just 17 months and, despite a brilliant court culture and his able leadership, his reign was to end in defeat to the English once more, at Solway Moss, and premature death, leaving a troubled realm to his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots.



Undercover Egghead

Isaiah Berlin is seen by many as the consummate British intellectual of the 20th century. A Russian Jew born in Riga, he witnessed the book-ends that enclosed what was one of the century's most significant phenomenon: the Russian experiment with Communism. Yet relatively little is known about Berlin's broader career beyond academia, where he undertook a number of roles in the sphere of propaganda and intelligence-gathering, which can be described under the blanket term of 'political warfare', as Antony Percy explains.

Code of Conduct

It is usually thought that the anti-sex, anti-violence Hays Code was harmful to Hollywood's film industry, intellectually unsophisticated, imposed from above and wholly un-American in its disregard for First Amendment rights. Yet it was intellectually nuanced, self-regulated, conformed to US values of Judeo-Christian ethics and free enterprise and its strictures often encouraged greatness. For good and bad, the Hays Code was as American as apple pie, as Tim Stanley explains.

Plus Months Past, Making History, Signposts, Reviews, In Focus, From the Archive, Pastimes and much more.

The October issue of *History Today* will be on sale throughout the UK on September 18th. Ask your newsagent to reserve you a copy.

PICTURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PASTIMES

Amusement & Enlightenment

The Quiz

- 1 The soldiers of which countries fought alongside the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad?
- 2 What was the last major battle to take place on British soil?
- 3 In which year was the US Supreme Court established?
- 4 Which French historian became Louis-Philippe I's chief adviser in 1840 and was forced into exile in London with him in 1848?
- 5 Which Greek general established a dictatorship in 1936 and led the resistance to Italy's invasion of Greece in 1940 before dying in 1941?
- 6 Held hostage by William the Conqueror, which King of Scots was knighted by William II?



- 7 Who was the last Mughal emperor, exiled to Rangoon from Delhi after the Indian Mutiny?
- 8 What is the name given to the youth movement of the Italian Fascist party, founded in 1926?
- 9 When the Dutch colony of Suriname in South America gained independence in 1975 around what



proportion of the population emigrated to the Netherlands?

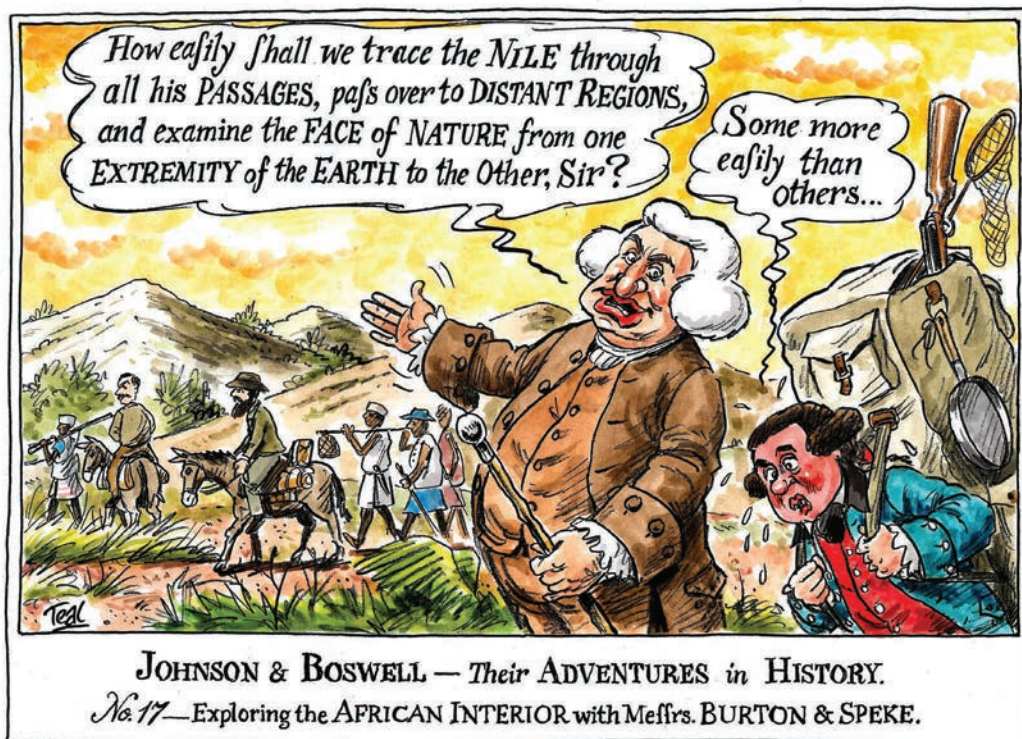
- 10 In which year did Britain's Company of Barber-Surgeons, whose premises were distinguished

by red and white poles, formally split from professional surgeons?

- 11 Which King of Sweden is also the country's patron saint, having led a Christian crusade to convert the Finns before being murdered at Uppsala in c.1160 by a Danish pretender to his throne?

- 12 Born in Kensington, London in 1819, who was the only child of Edward, George III's fourth son and Victoria Maria Louisa of Saxe-Coburg, the sister of Leopold I of Belgium?

- ANSWERS**
1. Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Romania.
 2. Culloden, April 16th, 1746.
 3. 1789.
 4. François Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787-1874).
 5. Ioannis Metaxas (1870-1941).
 6. Duncan II (c.1060-94).
 7. Bahadur Shah II (1775-1862).
 8. Baililla.
 9. 40 per cent.
 10. 1745.
 11. St Erik Jedvarsson.
 12. Queen Victoria (r.1837-1901).



Prize Crossword

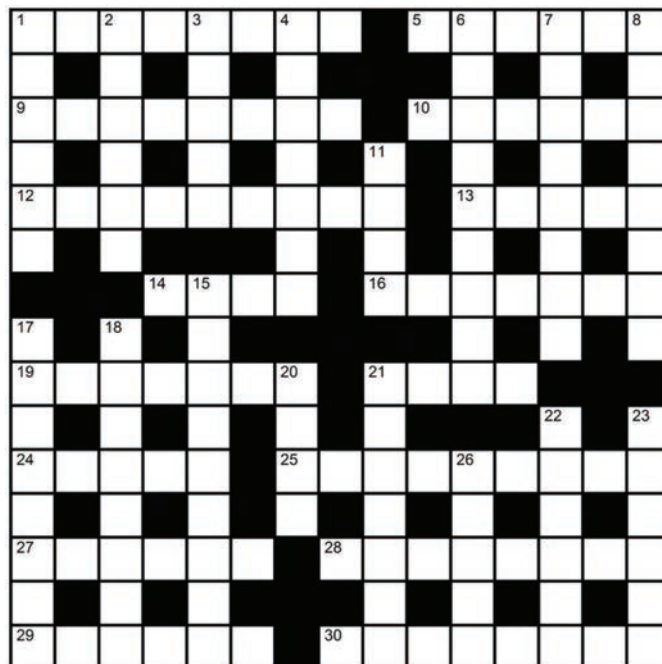
Set by Richard Smyth

ACROSS

- 1** Edward ____ (d.1775), English poet and contributor to the *World* (8)
5 Biblical queen of the Persian king Ahasuerus (6)
9 North Carolina county, represented by Congressman Felix Walker (8)
10 Johnny ____ (1934-2005), footballer for Fulham and England (6)
12 John ____ (1838-1922), US department-store founder (9)
13 Byzantine queen, d.803 (5)
14 Prince ____, title of Russian statesman Georgy Yevgenyevich (1861-1925) (4)
16 'All I know is that I am not a ____' – Karl Marx (attrib.), 1890 (7)
19 Gentleman thief created by E.W. Hornung (1866-1921) (7)
21 14th-century emperor of Mali, noted for a pilgrimage to Mecca (4)
24 Tom ____ (1781-1848), Gloucestershire-born prizefighter (5)
25 South-east London district, home to National Maritime Museum (9)
27 County of Ireland; its name derives from the Gaelic kingdom of Uí Failghe (6)
28 Epithet of the Norwegian king Harald Sigurdsson (d.1066) (8)
29 Muhammad Al ____ (1099-1165), geographer and cartographer at court of Roger II of Sicily (6)
30 John ____ (1921-2003), historian, author of *Douglas Haig: the Educated Soldier* (1963) (8)

DOWN

- 1** Historical region of South Africa, territory for the northern Sotho people (6)
2 Mordechai ____ (b.1954), Israeli nuclear technician and whistleblower (6)
3 Allan ____ (1930-92), author of *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) (5)
4 Vladimir Dmitrievich ____ (1870-1922), Russian journalist and reformer (7)
6 'There is plenty of time to win this game, and to thrash the ____ too' – Sir Francis Drake (attrib.), 1588 (9)
7 Louis ____ (1626-1701), Franciscan missionary and explorer (8)
8 Christina ____ (1830-94), English poet (8)
11 'The Dream of Eugene ____', 1831 ballad by Thomas Hood (4)
15 Ancient city of Morocco, annexed to Rome c.44 (9)
17 Antonio ____ (1495-1566), Florence-born humanist and translator of the Bible (8)
18 Rudolf ____ (1889-1979), author of a *History of Classical Scholarship* (1968-76) (8)
20 'The ____ of Monticello', byname of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) (4)
21 Zulu term for the wars and forced migrations of the 19th century in central and southern Africa (7)
22 Cavalryman of Ottoman Empire (6)
23 Hester ____ (1740-1821), writer and close friend of Samuel Johnson (6)
26 Ralph ____ (b.1934), US Presidential candidate 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 (5)



The winner of this month's prize crossword will receive a selection of recent history books



HT Entries to: Crossword, *History Today*, 25 Bedford Avenue, London WC1B 3AT by September 30th or www.historytoday.com/crossword

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington
(1732-99)

first President of the United States, appeared on America's first postage stamps, issued in 1847, as did fellow Founding Father ...

Benjamin Franklin
(1706-90)

who had a short-lived US state named after him during the Revolutionary War, which was the birthplace of ...

David Crockett
(1786-1836)

frontiersman and soldier, who was played on screen by ...



John Wayne
(1907-79)

who attended the University of Southern California, as did ...

Neil Armstrong
(1930-2012)

whose famous moon landing speech was covered by the official US public broadcaster Voice of America, which also broadcast the 'I have a dream' speech of ...

Martin Luther King
(1929-68)

whose birthday is celebrated as a US federal holiday, as is the birthday of ...

By STEPHANIE POLLARD and JUSTIN POLLARD

From *the* Archive

Alexander Larman takes issue with some of the assertions made in John Redwood's otherwise incisive 1974 article on the Earl of Rochester, the fast-living rake who epitomised the Restoration.

Steeped in Sin and Squalor

JOHN WILMOT, 2nd Earl of Rochester, epitomised the Restoration in miniature. Living fast and dying all too young of syphilis in 1680 at the age of 33, he 'blazed out his life and health in lavish voluptuousness', as Samuel Johnson later put it. Described in his own time as 'the wickedest man alive', he has built up a posthumous reputation as the rake's rake, a man steeped in the sin and squalor of an age dedicated to hedonism and the pursuit of pleasure.

The 1974 article, 'Lord Rochester and the Court of Charles II', by the future Conservative MP and minister John Redwood, takes steps to paint a more comprehensive picture of Rochester than the playboy of repute, placing him as the totemic figure of his time. Redwood illustrates the relief and hope with which the Restoration was greeted by many, saying 'most were satisfied that a better social order had reasserted its position in England'. The reopening of the playhouses and the foundation of the Royal Society indicated that both the arts and the sciences would find their niche in this new world, with Charles as patron to both. Nonetheless, Redwood does not paint a wholly accurate picture of Restoration Oxford or Rochester's role there; described by the antiquary Anthony à Wood as a 'strange effeminate age', where cross-dressing and sodomy were widespread, it was here that the young Rochester 'grew debauched' at the hands of his tutor, the occasional poet and likely pederast Robert Whitehall.

Redwood exaggerates Bishop Burnet's depiction of Rochester arriving at court in 1664 after his Grand Tour as a pure young man who then became infected by the decadence around him, although he notes that Burnet sought to convey a moral message by contrasting the louche atmosphere

of Whitehall with the eager and corruptible new arrival. He omits the salient detail that Rochester's military service, which he describes as the one truly useful thing that he ever undertook for court and country, took place as a means of proving his valour to Charles after the failed abduction of Rochester's eventual wife, Elizabeth Malet, and was dictated as much by necessity as bravery.

Redwood is perceptive on the half-luxuriant, half-paranoid atmos-



He saw the theatricality of the court as the stage on which to adopt a glittering persona

phere at court and the way in which an intelligent man could rise to its zenith. He offers what had become the standard line on Rochester's relationship with Charles, namely that the king enjoyed his company and wit too much to banish him from court permanently, even when he misbehaved. It now seems clear that the king's actions were also dictated initially by loyalty to Rochester's father, Henry Wilmot, his faithful supporter on his flight after the Battle of Worcester, and latterly by the need for a pliable ally who could be bribed in exchange for much-needed assistance.

Redwood uses the expurgated texts of Rochester's poetry, meaning that his cited opening lines of his dark satiric fantasia 'A Ramble In St James's Park' rely on the text 'Much wine had passed, with grave discourse/Of who kist who, and who does worse' rather than the more pungent 'Of who fucked who, and who does worse'. He also cites at least two poems which are no longer believed to be by Rochester.

One, 'Rochester's Farewell', assumes an attack on Louise de Kérouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth; in fact, Rochester wrote several anguished letters in an attempt to prove he had not libelled her. The other, 'On Rome's Pardon', leads Redwood to conclude that it indicates anti-Catholic sentiment, though it actually reflects a generalised dislike of organised religion, as expressed in his masterpiece 'A Satire Against Reason and Mankind'.

Redwood cites outrageous antics ascribed to Rochester that are now believed to be false, most notably a tale about him and the Duke of Buckingham opening an inn in an attempt to seduce travellers' wives. Nonetheless, his conclusions on Rochester – that he saw the theatricality and shallowness of the court as the stage on which to adopt a glittering persona that defined and defied the age – remain sound, as does his statement that 'the end of Rochester was an important event in English social and intellectual history'. While Charles would linger on for another five years, it is Rochester's death that signified the end of the era.

Alexander Larman is the author of *Blazing Star: The Life and Times of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Head of Zeus, 2014).



VOLUME XXIV ISSUE 5 May 1974

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at historytoday.com/fta